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SIXPENCE

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GUARDING THE IMPERIAL PALACE, TOKYO, in Dec. 1946, this Royal Navy sentry, at his post on one of the bridges spanning the Palace moat, is from H.M.S. Commonwealth, said to be one of the loneliest shore bases of the R.N. It comprises a force of 350 officers and men stationed at Kure, former Japanese naval base near the atom-bombed city of Hiroshima. Our seamen in Japan have earned for themselves unstinted admiration. See also illus. page 615. Admiralty photograph

Edited by Sir John Hammerton

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## British 1st Army's Gruelling Task in Tunisia



TROOPS NEWLY ARRIVED AT BONE gazed at the wreckage of the port (1) in December 1942. On a hillside outside Mateur a sniper (2) watched for that sign of movement which would betray an unwary enemy. A six-pounder anti-tank gun in position in the hills outside Medjex-el-Bab (3), captured on Nov. 26, 1942. See also facing page. PAGE 610 War Office photographs



# Blade Force's Gallant Failure was Invaluable

By A. D. DIVINE, D.S.M.

Author of

'Road to Tunis.'



ON December 3, 1942, the spearhead of the British 1st Army—Blade Force, the 11th Brigade and a handful of American armour—was thrown back, fighting with superb gallantry from the little town of Djedeida on the Medjerda river, 12 miles from the outskirts of Tunis. On May 12, 1943, Colonel-General J. von Arnim, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Army Group Afrika, surrendered in the areas north and south of Djedeida with his staff and more than a quarter-million men. Between these two things there is a direct connexion. The failure of Blade Force to reach the capital in the first rush of the race for Tunisia was one of the most valuable failures in the history of the British Army. It was, incidentally, one of the most gallant.

Why did we fail? To form a just estimate of the cause of the retreat from Djedeida and Tebourba it is necessary to examine the French North African campaign as a whole and Operation Torch in particular. Even in this war of enormous distances the lines of communication for Operation Torch were exceptional. The port of Algiers is 1,782 miles from the Clyde. It is almost precisely 4,000 miles from New York. Everything that the Army used—tanks, guns, food, men, petrol, ammunition—had to be carried by sea. In the dire circumstances of the submarine war at the time it was obvious that there was an absolute limit to the amount of shipping available for the operation.

## General Anderson's Great Problem

The campaign was begun, therefore, with a fixed maximum of men. That maximum, because of the enormous distances involved in the area to be occupied, had to be split in three: the Casablanca landing force to capture the west coast and to cover the expedition against the possible intervention of Franco-Spain; the Oran force to capture and hold the centre; the Algiers force to occupy the most important port of North Africa and to form the springboard for the advance into Tunisia.

From this Algiers force—remember it was approximately a third only of the expedition—there had to be retained sufficient troops to handle the French, to garrison the area of Algiers and to provide lines of communication elements. The remainder was the army of Tunisia—an army working from a base

balanced precariously on the incessant threat of the submarine. And from that base the problem of distance arose in a completely new guise. Tunis is 560 miles from Algiers port—560 miles of the desolate passes of the high Atlas—560 miles with two roads only, roads never built for the passage of modern armies—560 miles with only one precarious, broken-down line of rail.

ON November 9, 1942, when Lieutenant-General K. A. N. Anderson landed on Maison Blanche aerodrome at Algiers he had to face the problem of those 560 miles and his inadequate transport. He had to face, too, a multitude of other problems. The first of these was the question of the French; the second the question of the small ports to the east of Algiers. A single paragraph from General Anderson's dispatches admirably illustrates those things:

"I must state here that when in the planning stage it was decided that no assault landing should be made east of Algiers. Then, in my opinion, my chance disappeared of reaching Tunis before the Germans, unless the French put up a stout resistance to Axis entry into Tunisia. In actual fact, the French resisted at Algiers (feeble though their resistance was, yet its consequent repercussions caused delay and doubt) and did not resist the Axis in Tunisia. The first German landings at El Aouina airport on November 9 were not opposed."

There has been criticism of the failure to make landings simultaneously with the main invasion at the three small ports to eastward: Bougie, Djidjelli and Bône. The principal reason for that failure was the decision which placed the "bomb line"—the line inside which the powerful German-Italian air forces of Sardinia and Sicily could seriously challenge a shipborne invasion—a little to the east of Tunis itself. If the critics had seen, as I saw, the wrecked ships of Bougie—if they had crouched, as I crouched, under the incessant night raids on the harbour of Bône—it is possible that that criticism might have been less vocal. That was the first part of General Anderson's problem.

The second was that of the French. It was one of the strange illogicalities of the attitude

of Vichy that while after capitulation there was never any attempt to oppose the forces of the Axis (Indo-China, Tunisia and Southern France are the classical examples). French logic found it necessary to withstand her late allies with the utmost vigour, as in Syria, Madagascar, Dakar and Morocco. In considering General Anderson's problems it must be remembered always that the resistance put up by the French in North Africa was no mere token resistance.

## Nearest Supply Base 2,000 Miles

The French fought hard against us at different points in the first phase of Operation Torch. In Tunisia not only did they fail to offer the slightest opposition to Von Arnim's landing at El Aouina and at Bizerta, but from November 9, when that landing began, and up to the 19th, when General Barre, in command of the French Army of Tunisia, rejected Von Arnim's ultimatum, the considerable French forces that had withdrawn from the Tunisian littoral lay on the southern flank of General Anderson's advance as an obscure and sinister threat.

These things are the essentials of the race to Tunis: it sprang from an improvised base 2,000 miles from the nearest source of supply; it had to be carried out by a handful of men from an invasion force already split in three; it had to be driven almost 600 miles over lamentable land communications. And it had to challenge not only the threat of the German counter-invasion but, for ten dangerous days, the potential threat of the French themselves with all the possibilities of sabotage thrown in. The wonder is not that our splendid spearhead was thrown back from Djedeida, but that it ever succeeded in piercing so deep.

AGAINST these things must be balanced the possibilities that lay in Von Arnim's hands. Germany had expected an attack on Northern Africa—not, it is true, at the precise points at which we landed, but none the less in that quarter of the globe. She had in Italy a variety of forces. Most important of these was the extraordinarily powerful section of the Luftwaffe that operated from the island airfields of Sicily and Sardinia. In addition to these there were ancillary ground forces. There were formations training or being staged for the reinforcement of Rommel, and there was an adequate and



ON THE ROAD TO MEDJES-EL-BAB, TUNISIA, men of The Hampshire Regiment pass French troops guarding a bridge after the French adherence to the Allied cause on Nov. 19, 1942. The Hampshires greatly distinguished themselves at Sidi Nsir on Feb. 24, 1943, when they held one of the key positions of the Medjes-el-Bab salient against assaults of German infantry and armour. As part of Blade Force the Regiment saw some of the severest fighting in North Africa and suffered very heavy casualties.

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Photo, British Official





By November 22, Blade Force (17/21 Lancs Regiments) was concentrated at Souk-el-Arba. Farther south, American parachute troops of the 503rd U.S. Parachute Battalion had dropped at Youks-les-Bains. One medium American tank battalion, one light battalion and a handful of tank destroyers completed the force. General Anderson's plan comprised a two-pronged attack—one along the northern road to Mateur and Bizerta, one on the southern through Medjez-el-Bab to Tunis. Two brigades of infantry, a handful of tanks and armoured cars, a few parachutists and virtually no air support—all dangling at the end of 560 miles of atrocious

indeed elaborate supply organization operating down the roads and railways—as yet undamaged—of Italy and across the short sea passage of the Sicilian Channel, 90 miles against our minimum of 2,000.

Flying, disembarking, walking unhampered into Tunisia, Von Arnim completed his build-up with remarkable speed. On November 26, when we established ourselves for the first time across the Medjerda river, General von Arnim had concentrated in Tunisia the Storm Regiment Koch, the Barenthin Regiment, the Marsch Battalions 17, 18, 20 and 21, the Parachute Engineer Battalion Witzig, the 190 Tank Battalion, advance elements of the 10 Armoured Division, and miscellaneous artillery and anti-tank units; there were also the Italian 10 Bersaglieri Regiment and elements of the Superga Division, including four infantry battalions.

#### Enormous German Reinforcements

Those troops operated on lines of communication seldom more than 12-20 miles from the two good ports of Tunis and Bizerta. They operated under complete air superiority from airfields unaffected in this period by the rain and mud which destroyed our mountain landing grounds.

Again the wonder is not that they pushed us back from Djedeida, but that scarcely 12 miles down the road that runs beside the meanders of the Medjerda we held them fiercely, courageously and enduringly outside Medjez-el-Bab. That holding, it may well be, sealed the fate of Von Arnim and a quarter-million men, for it gave us the advantage of the strategic position on the downward slope on the tangled outcrops of the Atlas Mountains. We commanded the passes to the sea and we never lost that command.

But, on the other hand, it afforded the Germans

depth enough to give them grounds for hope—depth enough to encourage enormous reinforcements, to induce Hitler and the German General Staff to pour into North Africa a treasure in men, aircraft and equipment that was to affect considerably the grandiose schemes for the conquest of Russia, that was to overload, dangerously, the German production machine and was finally to break the heart of Italy.

What was the force that accomplished this triumph? General Anderson, setting up his headquarters at Algiers on November 9, moved forward at once. By November 13 he had occupied Bougie, Djidjelli and Bône in an effort to reduce the precarious nature of his lines of communication. Bône was occupied by two companies of the 3rd Parachute Battalion and No. 6 Commando. Already the first elements of the infantry, "a small column of all arms from the 11th Infantry Brigade Group (known as Hart Force and made mobile by pooling all the available Brigade transport)," had gone off into the blue in the sublime confidence that Bône would be ready when they reached it. On November 15 the 36th Brigade—on assault scales—had passed Bône and occupied Tebarka. On November 16 the 1st Parachute Battalion dropped at Souk-el-Arba aerodrome, and by November 17 that enterprising force, commandeering local transport, had advanced far beyond Béja and made contact with the Germans.

mountain road—came within 12 miles of winning Tunis in their first onset.

What men could do, these men did. The Lancashire Fusiliers pinned in the bed of the Medjerda River under withering mortar fire, the East Surreys attempting to capture the Djebel Mourbea by moonlight, the Hampshires cut to pieces outside Tebourba, the 36th Brigade storming Djebel Abiod and the heights of Jéna, again and again, made for themselves an imperishable history. And their failure reaped a tremendous reward.

It reaped a reward in other directions, beside the fantastic booty of the Tunis plain. In the tangled, difficult months that followed the American Army was "blooded." It learned the weaknesses of its material and of its training, and it learned the weaknesses of its psychological approach to war. The new American Army that was trained by the veterans of Tunisia was a fighting machine utterly different in impact, in strength, in fitness for war, from the troops which landed in Africa on November 8, 1942.

And there was still another prize, for in North Africa from the complexities of divided command, from the difficulties of liaison with the French when once they threw in their lots with ours, from the inevitable frictions, acerbities and failures of co-operation with the American Army, was forged the superb combined weapon that two years later smashed the Western Wall.

GERMAN A.A. GUN being dug in at Tebourba, whence men of the British 1st Army withdrew on Dec. 3, 1942, the 2nd Battalion The Royal Hampshire Regiment particularly distinguishing itself. The town finally fell to the Allies on May 8, 1943.

Photo, Keystone

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## Empire Outposts Now Provisioned From the Air



**IN 700 FLYING HOURS** half-a-dozen Dakotas accomplished in December 1946 a task that previously had employed 3,000 coolies over a period of six months. Maintenance of the Himalayan outposts has always been a matter of considerable difficulty, lying, as they do, in districts covered with dense jungle. They stretch from Balipara, just south of Tibet, to the north of the Naga Hills in Assam, and the Lohit Valley, south of Sikiang. The operation entailed the dropping of more than 300 tons of supplies, sufficient for six months, in narrow valleys shut in by mountains, there being no room for error of navigation or mechanical breakdown.



**UP THE SIANG VALLEY**, in the Himalayas, flies a Dakota (top) with supplies stacked in the doorway ready for dropping on an isolated British post. Inside, men of an air dispatch platoon are preparing to eject the cargo over the dropping zone; each wears a special harness to prevent his being dragged out of the aircraft (above). Items dropped included rice, butter, tea, potatoes, fish, biscuits, salt, soap, kerosene oil, cigarettes, matches and general medical necessities.

**AT MOHANBARI**, near Dibrugarh, on the Bengal-Assam railway, the aircraft are loaded with stores (left). The aerodrome has an all-weather surface of steel matting, because the vital operation of revictualing the outstations must not be delayed by bad weather. This system of air-supply was first used on a large scale by the late Major-General Wingate in 1943.

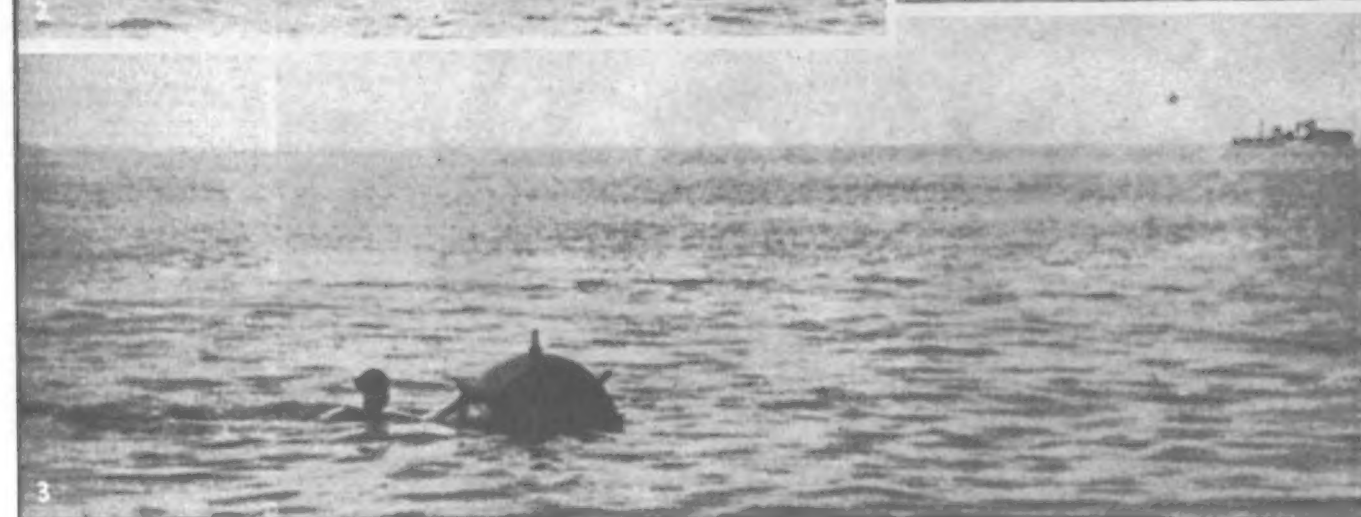
*Photos, Indian Official*

## We Sweep Treacherous Corfu Channel Waters



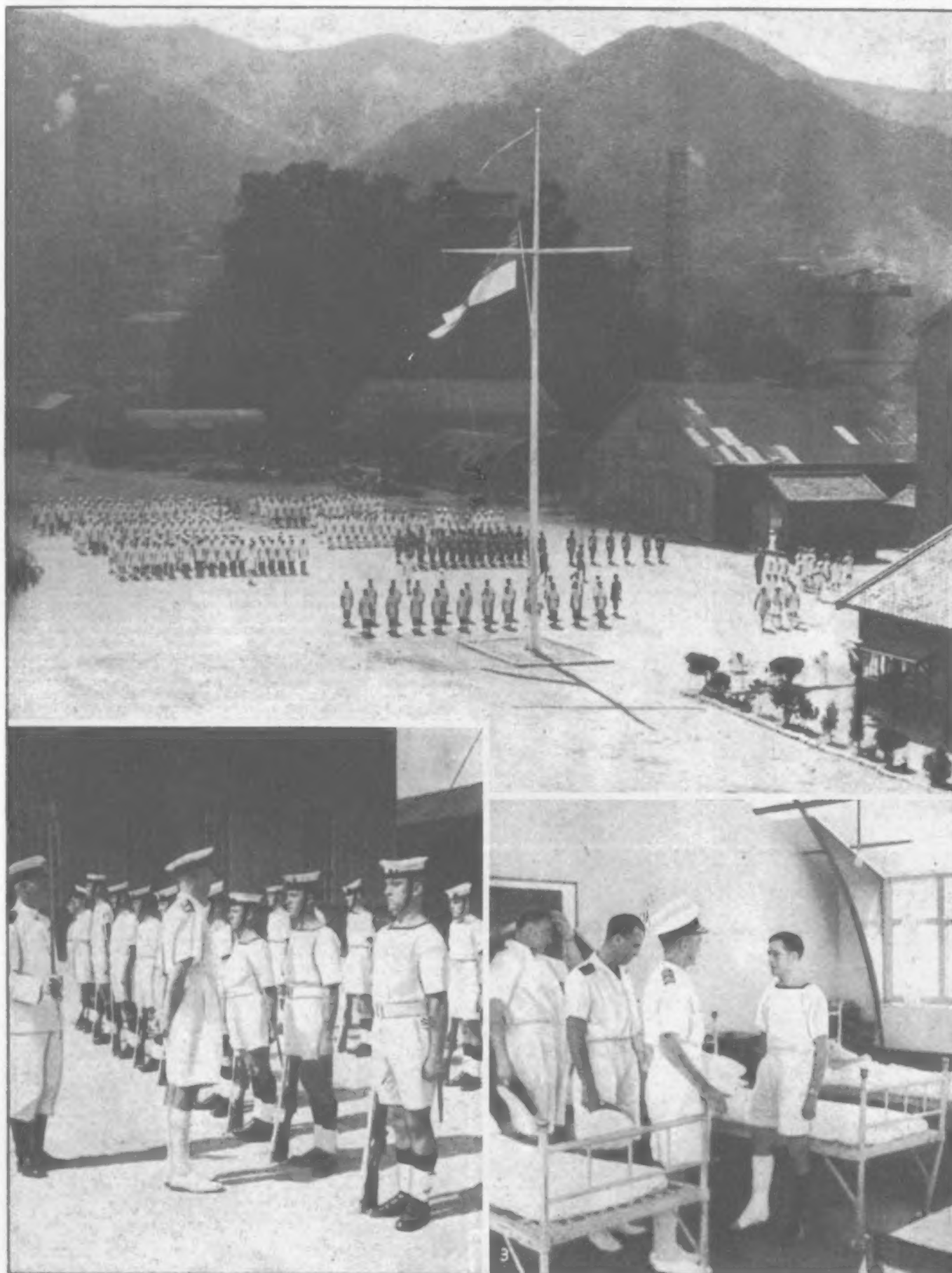
TWO BRITISH DESTROYERS, H.M.S. Saumarez and Volage, were damaged by mines on Oct. 22, 1946, in the Corfu Channel, between the Greek island of Corfu and the Albanian coast. Thirty-eight lives were lost and 45 officers and ratings injured. British minesweepers at once began to sweep the international waterway, and unexploded German mines were brought to the surface (1), though the channel had been cleared only two months previously. H.M.S. Saumarez was struck close to the bridge, and a fire started (2). Swimmers attached tow ropes to the mines after they had been rendered harmless (3) so that they could be brought ashore for inspection. (4). The British Government presented a note to the Albanian authorities demanding an apology and reparation, but the reply was unsatisfactory; and on Dec. 30, 1946, it was announced that the matter would be submitted to the U.N. Security Council.

Photos, British Official  
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## Shore Base of the Royal Navy in Occupied Japan



H.M.S. COMMONWEALTH at Kure, on the island of Honshu, is the British naval base that handles the supplies for the 40,000 men of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. There was a ceremonial parade (1) in December 1946 when the station was visited by Vice-Admiral Sir Denis Boyd, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.C., Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet. He inspected a guard of honour (2) and chatted with patients in the sick bay (3), which is in a specially constructed Nissen hut. See also illus. page 609.

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Admiralty photographs

## Delhi Meeting Momentous for India's Leaders



**WHEN THE FIRST MEETING OF INDIA'S NEW ASSEMBLY** was held at Delhi on December 9, 1946, it was symbolic of changed times that gilt frames on the panelled walls which till recently held portraits of previous Viceroys were empty. Throughout 1946 Indians had gradually been assuming responsibility for the administration of the country. A shadow was cast over the opening session by the absence of the Muslim League members, boycotting the Constituent Assembly. Differences between the Congress Party and the League concern the interpretation to be placed upon certain provisions in the Cabinet mission's statement of May 16, 1946—provisions relating to the proposed "grouping" of provinces under the new constitution. An attempt to resolve these difficulties was made in London before the inaugural session of the Assembly; but it was impossible wholly to reconcile the divergent views.



In the Council House, New Delhi (1 and 4), members of India's Constituent Assembly sat in provincial blocs, attired in a wide variety of costumes. Mr. Jinnah (2), leader of the Muslim League, and Pandit Nehru (3), chief of the Congress Party, arrived in London on Dec. 3, 1946, to confer with Mr. Attlee about difficulties which threatened the breakdown of India's Interim Government. Viscount Wavell (5), Viceroy of India, returned to England to take part in the discussions. See also illus. page 527.



## U.N. First General Assembly Concludes its Work



**THE UNITED NATIONS** First General Assembly opened its second meetings on Oct. 23, 1946, at Flushing Meadow, New York. Adjourned in London early in the year it should have been convened in early September, but protracted talks at the Paris Peace Conference caused further postponement. The session opened somewhat under a cloud but closed on a hopeful note, largely owing to the more conciliatory attitude of Mr. Molotov, leader of the Soviet delegation. The plenary sessions were held in the Assembly Hall at Flushing Meadow; but the committees, in which the delegates spent most working hours, sat at Lake Success, 10 miles farther out of New York City. It was estimated that 450 meetings would be necessary to dispatch the 53 items on the agenda. The last act of the Assembly was to reject a proposal to hold the 1947 session in Europe. It was agreed to meet again in New York on Sept. 16, 1947.



**FOUR FOREIGN MINISTERS HELD DISCUSSIONS** at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, during November and December 1946 in an endeavour to reach agreement on the peace treaties with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. Mr. Bevin is seated on the far side of the table, facing the camera; M. Couve de Murville, the French representative, is the fifth figure on the British Foreign Minister's right hand; Mr. Byrnes has his back to the camera; Mr. Molotov is screened by one of his colleagues. The ministers decided on Dec. 11 that the treaties with the former satellite states should be signed in Paris on Feb. 10, 1947. At one of the debates Mr. Bevin asked Mr. Molotov for specific information of what was going on behind the "iron curtain," and stated that Great Britain favoured some form of federated Germany, reserving certain functions for a central authority. The Ministers agreed to the appointment of a commission of inquiry into the Italian colonies and their future; but no decision was reached upon the financial arrangements for the Free Territory of Trieste after the Allied Military Government had been replaced by a Governor.

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**FLAGS OF 51 NATIONS** flew outside the Assembly Hall, Flushing Meadow, New York (1), on Oct. 23, 1946, to greet the delegates. Sweden, Iceland and Afghanistan were admitted to membership, their representatives being (2, 1 to r. front row), Besten Unden, Thor Thors and Hosain Aziz. Assistant secretaries-general were sworn in (3). Mrs. Pandit (4) led the Indian delegation and was one of the most forceful speakers in the Assembly, championing the cause of the Indians in South Africa.

## HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS

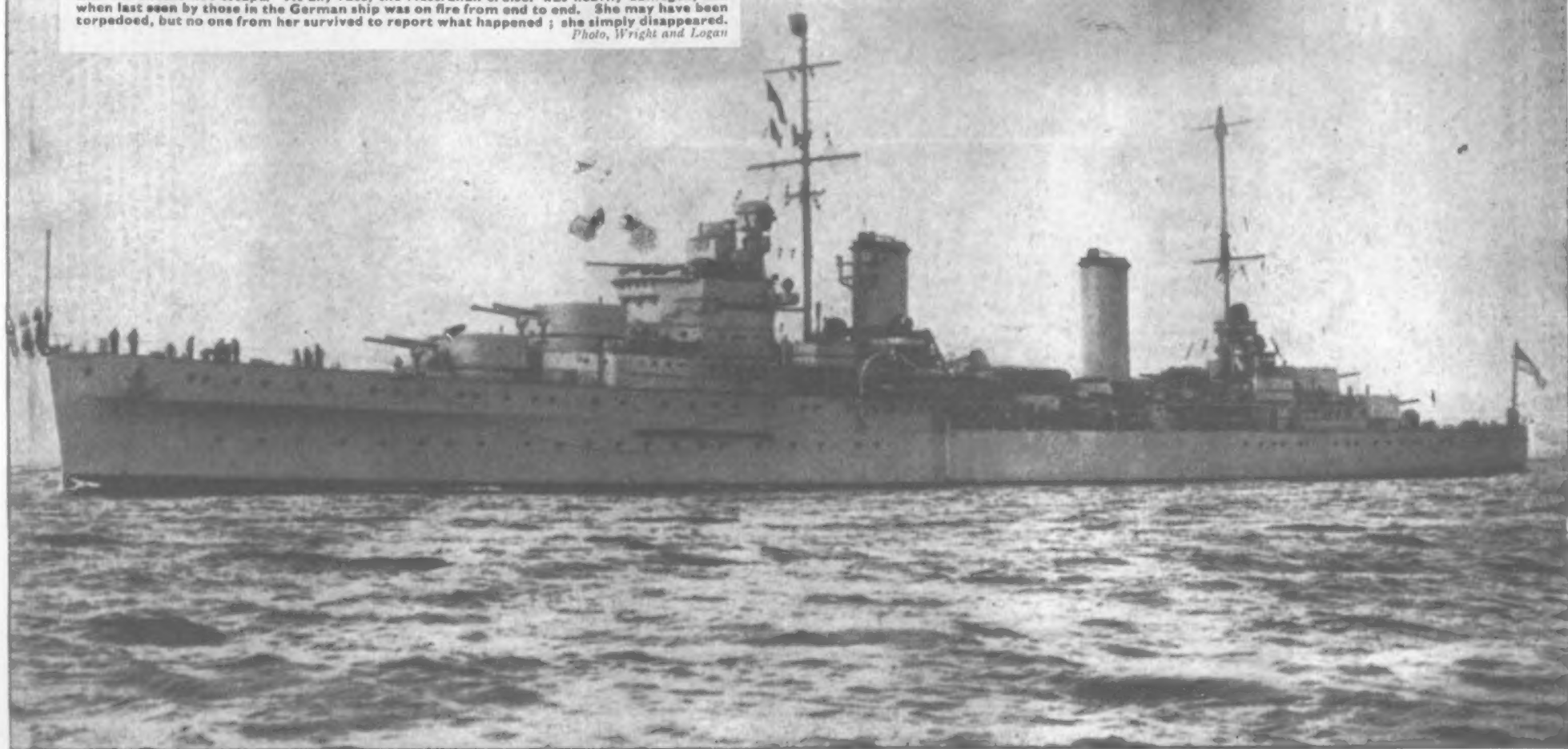
## H.M.A.S. Sydney

**A** CRUISER of 6,836 tons, launched in 1934, the Sydney bore one of the most famous names in the Royal Australian Navy. Her predecessor of the same name, also a cruiser, was responsible for sinking the notorious German commerce raider Emden in the Indian Ocean in the First Great War.

In 1940 the Sydney formed part of the First Cruiser Squadron, Mediterranean Fleet. She took part in various sweeps carried out by Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham in the hope of bringing the Italian Navy to action, and greatly distinguished herself in the second month of these hostilities. On the morning of July 19, 1940, she intervened in a running fight off the coast of Crete between four British destroyers and two Italian cruisers, both very fast ships. One of these, the Bartolomeo Colleoni of 5,069 tons, was hit repeatedly by 6-inch shells from the Sydney, and ultimately stopped, with smoke and flames pouring from her. Leaving the destroyers to complete her destruction with torpedoes, the Sydney continued in chase of the second enemy cruiser, which was also hit a number of times but succeeded in escaping through superior speed.

After Japan entered the war the Sydney returned to her home waters. On November 20, 1941, she intercepted a disguised German armed merchant cruiser, the Kormoran. Though the latter was sunk, the Sydney seems to have ventured too close to her opponent to ensure that she should not escape. At any rate, the Australian cruiser was heavily damaged, and when last seen by those in the German ship was on fire from end to end. She may have been torpedoed, but no one from her survived to report what happened; she simply disappeared.

*Photo, Wright and Logan*



## Records of the Regiments: 1939-1945

WHEN the call came in 1939 North-countrymen flocked to the Green Howards, to serve in battalions which were the descendants of Luttrell's infantry of many years ago. The two regular battalions (the 1st and 2nd) were swiftly reinforced by the four Territorial battalions—the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th—and these then were ready to withstand the first shock of war. The 1st Battalion played a notable part in the difficult campaign in Norway, then moved in turn to Scotland, Wales, Ireland, England, India, Persia,



Syria, Palestine and North Africa; thence it took part with the 6th and 7th Battalions in the landing on the east coast of Sicily, and fought doggedly northward in the van of the 8th Army. It won great distinction in the Anzio bridge-head, south of Rome, and ended the war in Europe on the Baltic coast of Germany.

There are certain experiences which stand out from the rest in the minds of those who fought with the 1st—the journey in motor transport across the Sinai Desert; prolonged and bloody fighting in the Plain of Catania, Sicily, in which Captain Hedley Verity was among those killed; the fast pursuit of the enemy up the west coast of Italy; winter patrols on the Sangro; casualties at the rate of 70 or 80 a week in the key "fortress" in the Anzio bridge-head; and the battle of Buchen Station in Germany, on May 1, 1945—the 1st Battalion's last action in their long war in many and varied theatres.

# The Green Howards

By  
Major E. W. CLAY, M.B.E.

FORERUNNER of the Green Howards, the 19th Regiment of Foot was raised in 1688 by Colonel Francis Luttrell, of Dunster Castle, near Minehead, and the men were drawn almost entirely from Somerset. Nearly 200 years later, the 2nd Battalion was raised at Exeter. The Regiment received its present title 200 years ago, when regiments were known by the names of their colonels. In 1744 there were two units in the same campaign commanded by a Howard; to avoid confusion one became known as the Green Howards (from the colour of the facings on the uniforms) and the other as the Buff Howards: the latter are the Buffs of today (see page 555). Yorkshire and the Regiment first became officially associated in 1872. Twenty-four battalions who wore the badge of The Green Howards in the First Great War added substantially to the Regiment's long list of battle honours.

The other regular unit, the 2nd, was in India from the beginning of hostilities and saw service on the Frontier before taking part in the Burma campaign, including the Arakan landing. The 8th Battalion was formed of old soldiers soon after the war began. So quickly did its ranks swell that it was able to throw off a second battalion, and subsequently both were merged to form the 30th Battalion, which went to the Mediterranean theatre in 1943 to work on the lines of communication.

The 9th Battalion was converted into a Light A.A. Battery, and the 10th Battalion turned parachutist and dropped on the Germans near Caen on D-Day in 1944.

Another battalion which changed its name was the 12th—it became a Recce Regiment. The 11th Battalion remained in this country throughout the war.

One's mind now turns to the four Territorial battalions which fought with the famous 50th (Northumbrian) Division—that much-travelled and war-scarred infantry division which was fighting in the Western Desert of Egypt in the half-forgotten days before Typhoons and Shermans, when "Strafer" Gott and Jock Campbell and others of that gallant company were struggling to save the Middle East in the face of heavy odds. The disastrous battles of Gazala and Matruh, the triumphs of Alamein, Marath and Akarit, and the assault on Sicily: the Division, with its Green Howards, sadly depleted after a desert disaster, experience! them all between 1942 and 1944 and was then brought home to be the spearhead of the assault in Normandy.

The story is too long to be told in all its rich detail of endurance and suffering, of setback and triumph. But there are some snapshots from the album of memory which throw the record into relief here and there. Let them serve, therefore, as a bird's-eye view of the war as seen by some of the Green Howards battalions, and as an indication of the contribution made not by individual persons or battalions but by the Regiment as a whole.

JUNE 1942—a month which the 8th Army of those days will never forget—is passing in a procession of fierce and sombre days. A tide of German armour and lorried infantry swirls against the Imperial positions in the Gazala Line. Like the tide, it comes on and then recedes, then advances again. Two battalions of Green Howards and a third battalion from Yorkshire, standing



TRAINING AT HOME IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 1940 the 7th Battalion The Green Howards took part in many anti-invasion exercises on the coasts of Britain; after Dunkirk the lessons so hardly learned on the battlefields of France had to be taught to young soldiers who were eventually to help to beat the Germans. The 7th was in the 50th (Northumbrian) Division, whose "T.T." formation sign (see page 300) denoted its principal recruiting grounds—the banks of the Tyne and Tees.





ON THE BARE HILLS OF CYPRUS Green Howards sweated and toiled in September 1941 during training in the mopping-up of parachute troops. The clear atmosphere and treeless, hilly country afforded excellent opportunities for the employment of visual signalling. The flag made a trustworthy substitute when the radio set went "dead."

Photo, British Official.

squarely in the path of a Rommel "schwerpunkt," are slowly strangled by encircling forces and finally go under in the heat and dust of the notorious "Cauldron." They were the 4th and 5th.

Farther north the 6th and 7th Battalions fight on, but the British gradually lose their grip on the Gazala positions. The 6th and 7th are surrounded in their turn. The 8th

Army withdraws. But the Green Howards cannot withdraw in the usual sense of the word, for the enemy are at their backs. Therefore, at night they break out westward, straight through the enemy's front, and drive in a great southward sweep through his rear areas, then eastward round his southern flank at Hacheim.

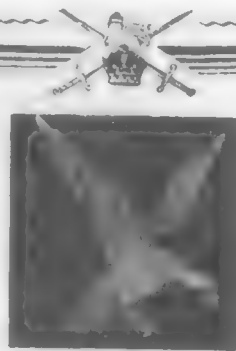
The enemy is startled and shaken as he



TRANSPORT OVERHAUL was an urgent matter, cracked vehicles, such as Bren carriers, especially suffering from rough usage, after the 6th and 7th Battalions broke out westwards at night through the Axis positions in June 1942. From the Gazala Line the Green Howards turned south, then east to rejoin the retiring 8th Army.

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Photo, British Official.



Colours: Red Eagle on Black

#### 4TH (INDIAN) DIVISION

THIS division, whose personnel was about two-thirds Indian or Gurkha and one-third British, concentrated in Egypt in the autumn of 1939 and was a part of the original desert force under General (later Field-Marshal) Wavell. When the offensive was launched against the Italians in December 1940 the 4th shared with the British 7th Armoured Division the honours of the victory of Sidi Barrani.

It was then transferred to Eritrea, where it gained, with the 5th (Indian) Division, another victory over the Italians, at Keren. It was next sent to the Middle East, one brigade taking part in the operations against the Vichy French forces in Syria. Once more reunited, the Division participated in the action at Sollum, in June 1941, and was engaged in General Auchinleck's offensive in November 1941, the battle of the Omars, the relief of Tobruk, and the hard fighting in Cyrenaica.

In March 1942 it was split up once again, one brigade going to Egypt, another to Palestine, and the third to Cyprus. The Division was with the 8th Army at Alamein; it assaulted the Mareth Line and won a great victory at Jebel Garci in April 1943. Then it was switched to the 1st Army front to take part in the final battle for Tunis and the capture of Gen. Von Arnim. In the following December it crossed to Italy, and in February and March 1944 took part in the bitter fighting at Cassino. In June the 4th was in action in the region of Lake Trasimene, and broke into the Gothic Line in August.

The Division then went to Greece, where the Germans were withdrawing, and remained there until the cessation of hostilities, embarking for India in February 1946, (see illus. in page 5). Military experts have adjudged the 4th to be one of the best divisions not only in the forces of the Empire but in the world. It won four V.C.s, and two George Crosses.

realizes that the troops he has been attacking and had thought to squeeze out of the battle are now attacking him. Some fight wildly, some run away. It is like a mad and lethal Guy Fawkes night as glowing tracer bullets and shells whiz in all directions through the darkness. Italians fight Germans. The Green Howards, in their battle-worn transport, drive through it all and on to Egypt, there to face about for the next round.

MARCH 1943, and the tide of battle has turned at Alamein, where the Green Howards inflicted severe punishment on the crack Italian Parachute Division, Folgore. The 6th and 7th Battalions have avenged the loss of their sister-units at Gazala by the capture of thousands of Italians and the General commanding the Brescia Infantry Division.

Now the 8th Army rumbles over the Libyan-Tunisian frontier and squares up to the Mareth Line. The main defences of this

# Green Howards Will Not Be Forgotten in Italy

NEAR LANCIANO, in January 1944, the 1st Battalion The Green Howards marched through snow on their way to the front line, the Bofors gun (1) guarding the track against low-level attacks by German aircraft. In the following February the Battalion was occupying trenches between Minturno and Santa Maria; one section in a reserve position amused themselves picking out tunes on a captured organ (2).

The Regiment won great distinction at Anzio, where this mortar team (3) bombed German positions in a wood. Even jeeps were unable to reach some of the forward positions near Forlì, and men of the 1st Battalion, climbing a rock-strewn track, had to bring up their supplies on mules (4). In some places the country through which the 8th Army advanced to the Sangro River in November 1943, was inaccessible even to mules and everything had to be taken forward laboriously by hand.

*Photos, British Official*

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## Records of the Regiments: 1939—1945



THE 6th BATTALION IN SICILY, advancing from Mount Etna towards Messina, marched through dense thickets of bamboos, which made them wonder if they had not reached Burma by mistake (left). Front-line troops were often quite ignorant of the course of the war and even of events taking place only a mile or two away, so at the headquarters of the 7th Battalion in Normandy maps were displayed (right) showing Allied progress.

formidable Axis position are screened by outposts; the Green Howards are charged with the task of obliterating them as a preliminary to the main assault. It is dark when "the Thugs" go forth. They are the special fighting patrol formed under the enthusiastic guidance of Lieut.-Col. D. A. Seagrim, C.O. of the 7th Battalion. They are tough and expert fighters who precede the Battalion to the objective. They lift a path through the minefields and pass silently on. Then there is a brief, hard fight with men of the Young Fascists' Division—and when the 7th Battalion arrives "the Thugs" are in complete control of the situation.

Later the main attack goes in. The Green Howards storm a flanking strong-point, and fight hand to hand through a tortured night with German infantry. Seagrim leads the attacks and kills many Germans. You understand the quality of his achievements that night when you know that they earned for him one of the three V.C.s gained by the Regiment during the war. He was killed later at the Battle of the Wadi Akarit, before he knew of the award (portrait in page 59, Vol. 7). The Green Howards move on, towards Tunis, then through Sicily.

H Hour, D-Day, 1944.—The Green Howards return to France. The men of these

battalions have made the journey via Cyprus, Palestine, Persia, the Western Desert, Tunisia, and Sicily. It is cloudy, with a choppy sea. The 6th and 7th Battalions approach the beaches of Normandy. The 6th lead the way into Occupied Europe, with the 7th at their heels. Once ashore, the 6th Battalion goes as far and fast as any other leading unit. This day, Company Sergeant-Major S. E. Hollis wins the Regiment's second V.C. of the war—the first V.C. in the Army to be awarded for the fighting in Normandy (portrait in page 376, Vol. 8).

THE battalions with the 50th Division had a full share of the heavy fighting in Normandy in the late summer, and were among the first infantry to cross the frontier into Belgium and Holland. They finished their fighting in the Second Great War near Arnhem, at which point the 50th Division, by this time one of the Army's veteran formations, was brought back to England for a well-earned rest and to assist in the training of new infantry cadres. The Green Howards found themselves in the pleasant country near the Vale of Pickering, in their own county once more, and shortly after VE Day they marched, with other members of the 50th Division, to their own service of remembrance and thanksgiving in the stately cathedral at York.

The link between the Home Guard Battalions of the North Riding and the rest of the Regiment was a very close one and promised to remain so even after disbandment. Middlesbrough, Scarborough and Bridlington conferred upon the Regiment the honour of marching through their streets with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and bands playing. As a result of the 1st Battalion's exploits in Norway in 1940 His Majesty King Haakon VII was made Colonel-in-Chief, succeeding in that capacity a close relation in the late Queen Alexandra.

The old Parish Church of Richmond, Yorkshire, which is the home of the Regiment, contains the Regimental Memorial Chapel. Every day a recruit from the barracks is detailed to turn over one page of the book containing the Roll of Honour of the 1914-1918 War. This Chapel serves also to commemorate those of The Green Howards who fell in the Second Great War.



THE 2nd BATTALION 'N BURMA experienced much hard fighting: here a patrol is being briefed by an officer in the Taungup area in April 1945 after taking part in the landings on the Arakan coast. The 2nd had been in action on the North-West Frontier of India before it was transferred to the Burma theatre.



## *Lisbon's Story Can Now be Told*



Throughout the war the Portuguese Government of Dr. Salazar maintained neutrality, in spite of the long-standing Anglo-Portuguese alliance and the pro-British feelings of the people. Though the country was virtually cut off from the rest of the European continent by the German conquests, a steady flow of ships and aircraft entered the port of Lisbon from the Americas and the East—and the capital is still busy. Foreign import and export trade is handled at the West Docks (1), and goods from the Portuguese colonies at the docks in Lisbon's East End: here (2) the cargo is melons. New British cars, just arrived, crowd the waterside (3).

*Exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED*



### ***The Daily Round in Portugal's Capital***

Though war brought increased trade to neutral Lisbon, where life continued in more or less peacetime conditions, privation began to be experienced, and in April 1944 bread rationing was introduced. Peace has been marked by rumours of revolt, and armed soldiers are seen on the streets: National Republican Guards change sentry (1) outside one of their headquarters in the city, whilst the busy kerb-side shoeblacks (2) continue their shining apparently without a care in the world.

ENIGMA  
THE WAR  
ILLUSTRATED

### ***Where Europe Gambled As Europe Bled***

Diplomats and agents of belligerent and neutral countries entered and left Lisbon freely: Estoril, ten miles from the capital, became the wartime rival of Monte Carlo and to the gaming tables of its Casino (3) flocked spies and wealthy refugees and business-men to gamble and conduct large-scale intrigues at the same time. Architectural splendour of Lisbon includes the imposing entrance to Rossio Railway Station (4), the National Theatre, Donna Maria II (5), and the Houses of Parliament (6).



### ***Airport of Lisbon a Great World-Junction***

*Exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED*

Twenty-three different air transport companies now use Lisbon's Airport, through which large numbers of refugees from Nazi persecution made their escape during the war. The first of its kind to arrive there, a Vickers Viking (1) of British European Airways was on a proving flight. Trans-Atlantic air-liners use it as a refuelling and passenger halt: in front of the entrance to the Airport building (2) the Avro York "Star Dale" (3) is outward bound from London to Buenos Aires.



## Our Empire's Proud Share in Victory

# CEYLON, MAURITIUS & THE SEYCHELLES

By HARLEY V. USILL

**B**y the Peace of Amiens in 1802, Ceylon (formerly a Dutch possession) was ceded to Great Britain and constituted a separate Crown Colony. The inhabitants of Ceylon were then no more than a haphazard gathering of heterogeneous peoples, divided by race, religion, tradition and interests; today she is fast becoming an integrated community and has a constitution which is well advanced towards control of her own affairs.

The population of Ceylon is approximately 6,650,000, of whom more than 3,300,000 are Sinhalese, descendants of invaders who came from Southern India in the 5th century B.C. They maintain a peasant tradition, whereas the bulk of the labour for the estates is drawn from the next largest group, the 1,500,000 or more Tamils. The remainder of the population is made up of about 325,000 Moorish descendants of Arabs who arrived centuries ago from the Malabar coast of India and have established themselves as traders; the so-called Burghers (about 32,000) descendants of the old Portuguese and Dutch inhabitants; a group of 15,000 Malays, who form the backbone of the native police force; and some 10,000 Europeans.

It was clear, even before the rapidity of the Japanese advance in early 1942 hit the Pacific with such force, that Ceylon would be called upon to play a many-sided part in the war, and steps were taken to prepare for any eventuality, including the distinct possibility of invasion. An Essential Service Labour Corps, organized on semi-military lines, was recruited for all kinds of emergency work. Tasks allocated to this Corps included the construction of runways, clearance of fire gaps, loading and unloading of ammunition, laying of underground cables, the painting of ships, the police and guard duties. A.R.P. measures were modelled on similar lines to those in force in India, and 30,000 men and women, of whom 20,000 were unpaid, had been enrolled by July 1942.

The Ceylon Defence Force included the Ceylon Light Infantry, the Planters' Rifle Corps, Ceylon Engineers, Ceylon Garrison Artillery, Ceylon Medical Corps (which provided the entire staff of the Ceylonese military hospital), Ceylon Army Service Corps, and Ceylon Auxiliary Pioneer Battalion. There were also two Companies of the Ceylon A.T.S., and in June 1943 an Air Training Scheme was launched for Ceylonese young men. The Ceylon Defence Force passed to War Office control in October 1941, and by May 1945 was over 25,000 strong. One of the main difficulties encountered, as was the case in Malaya and elsewhere, was to establish the relative priority between civilian and military duties for the small number of Europeans who held key positions in almost every aspect of the Ceylon war effort. The general policy introduced was to the effect that any manpower which could be spared from non-essential industries should be employed in local defence rather than overseas.

Nevertheless, individuals served in various theatres. Volunteers from the Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps served in Syria and Libya,

and others left for training in India. A unit of the Ceylon Garrison Artillery served overseas in the Seychelles and Cocos Islands, and several thousand Ceylonese saw overseas service in units of the British Army, mainly with the R.A.S.C. and the Royal Engineers. Members of the Ceylon R.A.F.V.R. completed their training in Britain preparatory to taking their places in R.A.F. squadrons.

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**I**n the matter of contributions to various war funds, the Ceylonese of all classes displayed the utmost generosity. By September 1943 there were over 2,000 Savings Groups in the Island. Gifts for aircraft amounted to £375,000 from the Ceylon Government, and



PIONEERS FROM MAURITIUS put finishing touches to a water-point at Benghazi after the final capture of the port by the 8th Army on Nov. 20, 1942. The first Mauritian Pioneer Company arrived in the Middle East in January 1941 and was followed by several others. Their work was mainly constructional engineering.

Photo, British Official

£236,000 from private sources. Other gifts from private sources totalled £241,883.

The testing time for Ceylon's defences came in April 1942. With the Japanese established in Burma, Malaya and the East Indies, the position in the Andaman Islands off the coast of Burma became impossible to hold, and the British garrison was withdrawn on March 12. When the Japanese moved in to the Andamans, Ceylon was right in the front-line and had not long to wait before she was attacked. On Easter Sunday (April 5) a force of 75 aircraft operating from carriers based on the Andamans made a dive-bombing and low-flying attack on Colombo Harbour, and the airfield and railway works at Ratmalana, eight miles south of Colombo. Of this force, 27 were either destroyed or damaged. A few days later, on April 9, the Japanese made another attack on the Island, this time on the R.N. base at Trincomalee. Guns and fighters accounted for 37 aircraft almost certainly destroyed, and two damaged.

Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander in South-East Asia, transferred his headquarters from New Delhi to Ceylon in April 1944. Thus the island of Ceylon, which earlier had marked the point at which the Japanese advance to

the West was halted, now held the proud position as the centre from which the enemy was to be driven back to final destruction.

The island of Mauritius (see page 83) was annexed in 1715 by the French, who imported about 65,000 slaves from Africa to work on the sugar plantations. The British took possession of the island in 1810, and with the introduction of the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833 the slaves were freed. Since many of them refused to continue to work on the plantations Indian immigration at the rate of 6,000 a year was introduced in 1842, and lasted until abolished in 1878. Thus, out of a population of about 420,000 there are 270,000 Indians. The rest of the population is made up of white Mauritians about 10,000, coloured Mauritians about 130,000, Chinese 10,000 and a few hundred British.

The whole of the agricultural life of Mauritius was bound up with the intensive cultivation of the sugar cane, the production of food for internal consumption being barely one-tenth of that required. And so, when war broke out, one of the most pressing problems facing Mauritius was to set about the task of increasing the production of food for the inhabitants.

The only local military unit in Mauritius then was the Mauritius Territorial Force. Later, it was decided to create a Mauritius Regiment with an overseas liability, and after training, in September 1943, the First Battalion was sent to Madagascar for garrison duties. The experiment was not a success, and in August 1944 the battalion was disbanded. Excellent service was performed, however, by Mauritians serving in pioneer units. The first Pioneer Company left for the Middle East in January 1941, and others followed until by May 1945 their strength totalled nearly 3,000. These units served with distinction not only in the Middle East but also in Malta, in Sicily and

in Italy. A number of Mauritians served with the R.A.F. as aircrew and ground staff.

All classes of the community subscribed generously to various war funds. Altogether gifts and loans free of interest received through the Colonial Office totalled £534,378 by July 1943. Thus, by the saving of shipping space by restriction on imports and by a successful campaign to make the Colony less dependent on imported food supplies, by the maintenance of a steady supply of sugar to the U.K., by the recruitment of men to serve overseas and volunteers for the R.A.F., Mauritius showed up well.

**P**OPULATION of the Seychelles (see page 83) is about 30,000, and up to July 1943 the people and Government had given over £13,000 to the U.K. Government, in addition to an interest-free loan of £3,750. The Colony's part in war production was represented by the export of thousands of tons of copra. A small Defence Force was raised in 1939, but in view of the vital strategic importance of the Colony it was not considered advisable to rely upon this Force to take over from regular troops garrison duties or coastal defence. But the Seychelles Pioneers, like the Mauritians, served with distinction in the Middle East and Italy.

# Europe's Wartime Capitals in 1947

## BUCHAREST

By J. C. GORDON

It has often been said about the capital of Rumania that no city in Europe affords more striking and pitiful contrasts of wretched poverty and almost fabulous wealth, Oriental customs and Hollywood-like ways, Byzantine tradition and modern French culture. These strange contrasts truly reflect the various influences which superseded one another in the making of Bucharest.

Legend has it that in the 12th century a shepherd named Bucur built a church on the Dambovitza, a small river which flows into the Danube 30 miles to the south. In his honour the village, which in due course grew up around the church, was called Bucuresti, "esti" being the usual Rumanian ending for names of localities. Rumanians still call it Bucuresti (pronounced Boocooresh-t). Bucharest is the French way of spelling it. Under the Turks, who controlled the Rumanian Provinces from the 15th to the 19th century, the village grew and prospered as a trading centre. It eventually developed into a town marked by local colour and native beauty; picturesque white one-storey villas, the architecture of which was inspired by that of peasant houses, old Rumanian wooden churches with artistic carvings and Byzantine frescoes.

The real Westernization and modernization of Bucharest began as late as the last century, when Rumania had achieved her national independence. A palace was built for the King, luxurious villas for members of his court and prominent Government officials, grey-stone monumental buildings to house Government departments and national and municipal institutions. To commemorate final victory against the Turks which resulted in Rumania achieving her independence in 1878, Bucharest's main street was named Calea Victoriei, which means "The Victory Road."

Today Calea Victoriei, with its luxurious shops, café-terraces and concrete multi-storeyed blocks of flats and offices, looks much like a modern street in any up-to-date city. The central telephone exchange built by an American company on the pattern of a New York skyscraper looked rather out of place some 13 years ago, but since then similar blocks have mushroomed year after year along the Calea Victoriei and the big boulevards in the city's centre. Now it is the few remaining little wooden huts and brick bungalows which strike a discordant note. In spite of this astounding progress achieved in less than three decades the suburbs remain very much what they were—narrow, dusty or muddy streets with small, dilapidated, primitive and unhygienic cottages, inhabited by desperately poor people.

Most conspicuous among them are the gypsies—barefooted girls in their colourful costumes balancing huge baskets of flowers on their heads, their mothers offering to tell your fortune from your hand, or from a greasy old pack of cards, or by putting a large sea-shell to their ears and listening intently to mysterious echoes; while their menfolk follow the more prosaic occupations of street corner traders, newsvendors and shoeblacks. Others make a living in cafés and bars, fiddling those haunting melodies for which the Rumanian gypsy is famous throughout the world.

Bucharest, which in 1939 had just short of 1,000,000 inhabitants, today has more than one and a half times that number. Thousands of refugees from the drought-stricken provinces and the war-ravaged towns and villages of Eastern Rumania, Poles who

fled from the advancing Germans in 1939, and other international flotsam have made this one of the most overcrowded cities on the Continent. Phenomenal prices, even by London standards, are daily paid for leases of houses and as "key money" for flats. The housing situation was further worsened by war damage. Though Bucharest did not suffer much from air raids, one-tenth of its 102,559 buildings were completely destroyed by military operations and a rehousing drive launched in 1946 has yet to bear fruit.

There are things of which Bucharest is certainly not short: good restaurants, night clubs and places of amusement. The average Rumanian can seldom afford to take full advantage of them, but this does not seem to worry their proprietors unduly, for the restaurants are usually full. The mystery of their sources of supply remains to be solved by the authorities concerned with the repression of black market offences, for there is practically nothing one cannot order in a Bucharest restaurant. Nowhere in Europe is food so abundant and cheap.

### Paved With Black Market Gold

Though first-class restaurants are not within the average person's reach, the black market is. Fear of starvation has become almost second nature to many Rumanians, who think nothing of storing half a pig and 50 pounds of cheese (if they can get it) in their larders. Food hoarding is, of course, a punishable offence, but Bucharest citizens are not afraid of breaking the law where food is concerned. Workers and civil servants, however, have their own sources of supply for scarce goods—the newly created "economy" or co-operative shops which purvey to members, at official prices, a wide variety of commodities in short supply which are otherwise obtainable only at prohibitive prices.



GIPSY GIRLS SELLING NEWSPAPERS in Bucharest did brisk business on the night of Nov. 22, 1946, when the papers gave the news of the Government's victory at the elections. Photo, Associated Press

Most precious and sought-after items (unobtainable even at the co-operative shop) are chocolate, coffee and tea. Officially, practically none of these has been imported since the end of the war, but provided you are willing to pay the price any amount will be promptly delivered to your home. Rumanians are said to have a sweet tooth, and in order to make their famous "placintae" (a kind of fluffy apple pastry) they have to supplement their meagre sugar ration on the sly. Leather shoes (which are rationed), razor blades and American cigarettes are other commodities in which there is a flourishing illegal trade.

The black market in foreign exchange has a street of its own. Situated between the National Bank and the Stock Exchange Building you can see there little knots of gesticulating men bargaining noisily in broad daylight. Suddenly word is passed around that a police raid is imminent. Everyone scatters and next day the newspapers proclaim in two-inch headlines that "Bucharest streets were paved with gold." For some of the traders were forced to jettison their sovereigns, gold dollars and louis napoleons.

But Bucharest life is not all restaurants and black market. Since the war there has been a great cultural revival. Theatres and cinemas, art galleries and concert halls are thronged. New editions of Rumanian and foreign books are sold out within a few days. Rumanians, whom Goebbels had starved for six years of Anglo-Saxon drama and new works by English and American authors, are eagerly snapping up every new translation. Plays by Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, J. B. Priestley and Eugene O'Neill are having record runs. Cinemas which showed such films as San Demetrio-London, Kipps, Fanny by Gaslight and Colonel Blimp were besieged by eager crowds.

The people of Bucharest are fond of fresh air and spend a good deal of their time out-of-doors. The most popular public park is the Cismigiu, beautifully laid out and situated in the centre of the city. Its wide alleys bordered by multi-coloured beds of flowers converge to a central lake featuring a big water-jet magnificently illuminated at night. There, sitting at a table on the terrace of the popular café called "Monte-Carlo," overlooking the lake, you can watch the soldiers on leave, young boys and romantic couples rowing or paddling in the summer and skating on the frozen lake in the winter. On Sundays most of the visitors to the Cismigiu are servant-girls, buxom, apple-cheeked country maidens wearing bright-coloured skirts and scarves. Hundreds crowd around the brass band to hear martial tunes and the latest popular songs.

The well-to-do spend summer evenings and often a good deal of the night at the open-air restaurants and cafés listening to gypsy music and drinking glass after glass of "spritz," which is white wine with iced soda-water. The most fashionable of these places are along the Kisseleff Chaussee, a wide tree-lined avenue with spacious lawns, parks and luxurious villas on either side, and described as the Champs Elysées of Bucharest. Club-houses such as the Country Club (golf, tennis, riding) frequented by foreign diplomats and big business men are also here, as well as the Kisseleff Strand, one of the largest and best equipped swimming pools in Europe. Fifty years ago the whole area was a marshy and wooded strip of land, infested by mosquitoes and frequented by armed robbers. Now the swamps have been drained and the grounds turned into a beauty spot.

## Crowded Hours in Modernized Old Bucharest



**ACCLAIMING THEIR NEWLY-ELECTED LEADER, Premier Petru Groza, a great concourse assembled on Nov. 22, 1946, in 8th June Square (1). Railways are uncertain and passengers storm the trains at North Station (2). Trams provide the principal means of transportation and these too are usually besieged. New buildings in course of erection in Bratianu Boulevard (3), the Rumanian capital's main thoroughfare. See also facing page. PAGE 629 Photos, Associated Press**



## Sight-Seeing in Europe with Our Roving Camera



**A BRIDGE-MAKING FACTORY** is in course of erection at Czernowitz, Russia. Parts of the plant are already in production and have supplied the ironwork for a new bridge over the Dniester River. Czernowitz, or Cernauti, is in N. Bukovina, finally ceded to Russia by Rumania in September 1944.



**WAR-SCARRED BELL** of H.M.S. Illustrious was exhibited at a naval exhibition in Paris during December 1946. This aircraft carrier had a distinguished war record. She was at Taranto and was severely damaged in January 1941 when she fought her way through to Malta with a convoy.



**BRITISH D-DAY EQUIPMENT** aroused great interest at an exhibition in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. In the foreground is a model of a large tank-landing craft, and on the wall hang photographs of Mulberry Harbour. Included in the display were examples of all major weapons and devices used against the German coastal fortifications and in the Allied advance across Europe.



**IN THE SAAR** on Dec. 23, 1946, the French took the first step towards economic annexation of this region by placing 1,200 Customs officials along the German frontier. Two Customs men are seen erecting a sign at cross-roads near Homburg. Reason was to prevent extra food supplied to Saar miners passing into Germany.



**HUNGARY'S DANUBE FLEET** vanished with the retreating Germans in 1944 and was later found in the American zone in Austria. The U.S. authorities agreed to return the vessels, the first craft arriving at Budapest in December 1946. In the background (left) are ruins of the chain bridge destroyed by the Germans.

Photos, Planet News, I.N.P., Topical PAGE 630

## Deathless Honour for Such as These



Lieutenant THOMAS WILKINSON, V.C., R.N.R.

**POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF THE V.C.** in recognition of his heroism and self-sacrifice and of that of all who fought and died with him in a most gallant action on February 14, 1942, was announced on December 17, 1946. On the former date H.M.S. Li Wo, a patrol vessel of 1,000 tons and formerly a passenger steamer on the Upper Yangste River, was sailing from Singapore to Batavia. Her ship's company consisted of 84 officers and men, including one civilian. The crew were mainly survivors from others of His Majesty's ships, but a few were from units of the Army and R.A.F. The armament was one 4-inch gun, for which she had 13 practice rounds, and two machine-guns.

Since leaving Singapore the previous day four air attacks had been beaten off, and the vessel had suffered considerable damage. Late in the afternoon two enemy convoys were sighted, the larger of which was escorted by Japanese naval units, including a heavy cruiser and destroyers. Lieutenant Wilkinson (left) gathered together his ship's company and told them that rather than try to escape he had decided to engage the convoy and to fight to the last, in the hope of inflicting some damage on the enemy. In making this decision, which was heartily endorsed by the entire crew, he knew that his ship faced certain destruction and that his own chance of survival was small.

H.M.S. Li Wo hoisted her battle ensign and steamed towards the enemy. In the ensuing action her two machine-guns were used with effect upon the crews of all ships in range, and the crew of the one 4-inch gun set on fire one of the transports.

**AFTER** a little over an hour the Li Wo had been critically damaged and was sinking. Lieutenant Wilkinson then decided to ram a large transport that had been abandoned by her crew. It is known that this ship burnt fiercely throughout the night following the fight and was probably sunk. H.M.S. Li Wo's gallant fight ended when, her shells spent and under heavy fire from the enemy cruiser, Lieutenant Wilkinson gave the order "abandon ship." He himself remained on board and went down with her. There were only about ten survivors, who were later made prisoners of war.

Sub-Lieutenant Ronald G. G. Stanton, R.N.R., who was First Lieutenant of H.M.S. Li Wo and her only surviving officer, was appointed a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order on Dec. 17, 1946. The organization of the ship devolved on him; and during the action he served as a member of the volunteer crew of the 4-in. gun, which weapon was fought with steadfast courage in the face of overwhelming odds. Acting Petty-Officer Arthur William Thompson was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal for his outstanding conduct in such a brave company. He volunteered to serve as gun-layer to the 4-in. gun, carrying out his duties with great coolness and displaying the utmost skill, courage and resource throughout the action. Leading-Seaman Victor Spencer, who manned the port machine-gun, received the Distinguished Service Medal for his resolution and steadiness. Able Seaman Albert Spendlove, who was a member of the 4-in. gun crew, was also awarded the D.S.M.

Madame VIOLETTE SZABO, G.C.

**AWARDED THE GEORGE CROSS** posthumously on December 17, 1946, Madame Szabo, as a member of the Women's Transport Service (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry), had volunteered to undertake a particularly dangerous mission in France and was parachuted into that country in April 1944. In her execution of the researches entailed she showed great presence of mind and astuteness. She was twice arrested by the German security authorities, but managed to escape each time. Eventually, however, with other members of her group, she was surrounded by the Gestapo in a house in the south-west of France.

Resistance appeared hopeless, but Madame Szabo, seizing a Sten gun and as much ammunition as she could carry, barricaded herself in a part of the building and exchanging shot for shot with the enemy killed or wounded several of them. By constant movement she avoided being cornered and fought until she dropped exhausted. She was arrested and had to undergo solitary confinement. She was then continuously tortured, but never by word or deed did she give away any of her acquaintances or tell the enemy anything of value. She was ultimately executed. Madame Szabo gave a magnificent example of courage and steadfastness.

She was 24 years of age, and in 1940 married an officer of the French Foreign Legion (right), who was killed at Alamein in 1942. She joined the A.T.S. in 1941, and later was attached to the W.T.S., being employed on Intelligence work after her husband's death. She spoke perfect French, having been brought up partly in France and partly in England. She is survived by a four-year-old daughter. (see illus. page 640).

**THE** final story of the fate of this very brave woman was told at Hamburg on January 1, 1947, during the trial of 16 members of the staff of the notorious Ravensbruck concentration camp, where she was imprisoned with two other women agents—Lilian Rolfe and Denise Madeline Bloch. In a deposition read to the court, Johann Schwarzhuber, the deputy camp commandant, described how the three heroines were shot, without evincing the slightest sign of fear.

Lilian Rolfe was an Englishwoman, born in Paris, who joined the W.A.A.F. in 1943. Because of her fluent French she was voluntarily transferred to a section of the Army which was preparing to staff the Underground Movement on the Continent. In March 1944 she was parachuted into France, where she joined up with Denise Bloch. Both women worked as wireless operators, keeping in touch with Allied forces until their capture by the Gestapo in July 1944. They remained silent under six months of torture and questioning, their bravery evoking the admiration even of their persecutors.

Photos, Keystone, Topical

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**Shpwt. G. BADROCK**  
Royal Navy.  
Action: France. 7.8.44.  
Age 20. (Albham, Ches.)

# The Roll of Honour

1939—1946

No great loss when the response of people to our invitation to submit portraits for our Roll of Honour that no more can now be accepted. But readers may rest assured that all those so far received will be published.

**Pte. F. BULLEN**  
Royal Norfolk Regt.  
P.O.W. : Siam. 6.2.44.  
Age 29. (Lowestoft)



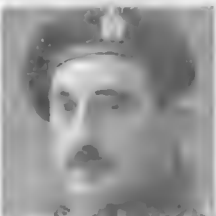
**L/Sgt. D. J. BAITUP**  
The Buffs.  
D. wds. : N. Africa. 27.3.43.  
Age 21. (Crembank)



**L.Bdr. CHATTERTON**  
Royal Artillery.  
Action: El Alamein. 2.7.42.  
Age 25. (Liverpool)



**Flt. Sgt. H. CLARKE**  
Bomber Command R.A.F.  
Wilhelmshaven. 16.10.44.  
Age 25. (Birmingham)



**L.Cpl. P. J. COE**  
City of London Yeomanry.  
Action: Libya. 19.11.41.  
Age 28. (London)



**Flt. Sgt. S. COWLEY**  
Royal Air Force.  
Over Germany. 4.11.43.  
Age 21. (St. Helens)



**Pte. J. L. COLLETT**  
Gloucestershire Regt.  
Action: N'mandy 12.8.44.  
Age 18. (Bristol)



**Dvr. CRUDGINGTON**  
R.A.S.C.  
Action: Dunkirk. 1.6.40.  
Age 37. (Nottingham)



**Pte. T. CUNNINGHAM**  
Seaforth Highlanders.  
Action: Somme. 4.6.40.  
Age 19. (Wakefield)



**A. B. E. DAY**  
H.M.S. Puckeridge.  
Action: At sea. 6.9.43.  
Age 19. (Sheffield)



**L.Cpl. H. G. DEARDEN**  
No. 1 Commando.  
Action: Burma. 31.1.45.  
Age 27. (Swinton)



**Pte. J. A. DEARDEN**  
The Green Howards.  
D.wds. : M. East. 25.3.42.  
Age 22. (Sheffield)



**A. B. H. DEWHIRST**  
H.M.S. Repulse.  
Action: At sea. Dec. 41.  
Age 20. (Keighley)



**Torp. F. T. FRENCH**  
H.M.S. Exeter.  
Action: R. Plate. 13.12.39.  
Age 19. (Plymouth)



**Boy E. FRESHWATER**  
Royal Navy.  
Action: Singapore. 16.2.42.  
Age 18. (Upper Dean)



**Sgt. D. O. HENN**  
Staffs Yeomanry.  
Action: Casn. 18.7.44.  
Age 29. (Gnosall)



**Cpl. R. JACKSON**  
London Irish Rifles.  
Action: Italy. 15.5.44.  
Age 21. (Carnmoney)



**Pte. C. M. KENT**  
Beds. & Herts. Regt.  
D.wds. : Medit. 28.8.44.  
Age 27. (Leek)



**B.Q.M.S. C. LAHRA**  
Royal Malta Artillery.  
Action: Rabat. 20.7.43.  
Age 27. (Rabat)



**Pte. G. LE MAITRE**  
East Lancashire Regt.  
Action: Holland. Feb. 45.  
Age 19. (Birmingham)



**Sgt. P. McGINN**  
Royal Air Force.  
Action. 23.4.44.  
Age 20. (Durham)



**Pte. R. MILLER**  
R. Northumberland Fus.  
Action: M. East. 22.11.41.  
Age 20. (Newcastle)



**L.A.C. D. G. MOPPETT**  
R.A.F.V.R.  
P.O.W. : Celebes. 6.1.45.  
Age 24. (Lewes)



**A.C. J. M. MORTON**  
Royal Air Force.  
A/S. St. Mawgan. 21.10.44.  
Age 22. (Leicester)



**Sgt. H. OLIVER**  
Dorset Regiment.  
Ac. : W. Europe. 29.4.45.  
Age 26. (Croydon)



**Cpl. R. W. PADFIELD**  
Somerset L.I.  
Action: N'mandy. 21.7.44.  
Age 23. (Holcombe)



**Pte. J. RENSHAW**  
S. Staffs. Regt.  
Action: Falaise. 12.8.44.  
Age 19. (Leek)



**A. B. A. ROLLIN**  
H.M.S. Campbelltown.  
Ac: St. Nazaire. 28.3.42.  
Age 23. (Retford)



**Cpl. A. E. SHAND**  
Scotts Guards.  
Action: Norway. 24.5.40.  
Age 25. (Burnham)



**Ste. S. F. SMITH**  
H.M.S. Charybdis.  
Action: Channel. 23.10.43.  
Age 19. (Yiewsley)



**Flt. Sgt. A. TAYLOR**  
R.A.F.V.R.  
Action: Burma. 19.2.45.  
Age 21. (Aberdeen)



**L/Sgt. G. THURLEY**  
Suffolk Regiment.  
Action: Italy. 26.11.43.  
Age 30. (Bishop's Stortford)



**L/Cpl. R. J. TOMS**  
Dorset Regiment.  
Action: Burma. 1.5.44.  
Age 26. (Salisbury)



**Gnr. H. TURPIN**  
R.H.A.  
Action: Italy. 7.7.44.  
Age 32. (Bradford)



**A. B. L. J. WALKER**  
Royal Navy.  
Act. : Java Seas. March 42.  
Age 21. (Eccles)



**L/Sto. E. H. WATTS**  
H.M. submarine Orpheus.  
Act. : Off Benghazi. 29.6.40.  
Age 25. (Yoteley)



**Dvr. A. C. YOUNGS**  
R.A.S.C.  
Action: N. Africa. 1.11.44.  
Age 27. (Salcott)



## THE HUMAN STORY OF 1939-1946

# I Was There!



### A Clerk Takes a Jump Into France

When the Great Invasion of 1944 was in full swing Private Roger Messent of the 2nd Parachute Brigade "dropped in." He presents a behind-the-scenes picture of the Allied landing in Southern France as seen by a soldier whose job was not fighting but clerical work.

**A**FTER many days of frantic preparation we arrived, on the evening of August 15, 1944, at an airfield near Rome. The sight of many huge American transport planes was awe-inspiring—as also was the fact that before long we would be leaping out of them over Occupied France. We had a meal, then lay down beneath the



ROGER MESSENT

wings of our plane and tried to get a little sleep, as we had to emplane at 1.30 a.m. The time wore on, and presently we were donning our mass of equipment, struggling to fix parachute harness on top of everything. There was much perspiring and heaving of straps and buckles before we were ready, and I was so trussed up and weighted down that I had to be helped on board. Soon after 2 a.m. the planes were away. I marvelled

how so many big machines, with only one runway, could get into the air so quickly.

So began our long flight. My harness was too tight, but it was so dark inside the plane that I dare not risk taking off my 'chute to adjust it. I tried to sleep, but was too uncomfortable. After some three hours our armada approached the French coast near

St. Raphael. We had been told to expect heavy anti-aircraft fire, but we heard nothing. We stood up, waiting to jump. Suddenly the red light glowed, then changed to green. I was jumping number four, and remembered just in time that it was my job to pull the container-release switch. I had no time to shout "Containers away!" when the others started jumping; then I was at the door.

I leaped out into the dark night, the slipstream hit me hard, and my 'chute opened. Before I had a chance to collect my wits I was lying on my back in an expanse of grapevines. For a second or two I remained motionless, thinking "So this is France!" then wriggled out of my harness. My first sensation was one of loneliness, for I could neither see nor hear anyone or anything.

#### Above the Crowded Landing Zone

With rifle to the fore I started to walk, and after travelling about half a mile I heard someone calling "Number four plane!" Thankfully I joined the other fellows—and realized that I had left my pack behind. But it was too late to worry about that. What we had to do now was to find the hamlet in which we were to make our H.Q. Suddenly rifle shots sounded in the distance and we saw bursts of red tracer. Bullets whistled uncomfortably close, and we took cover in a ditch until all was quiet again, and we reached our appointed destination without having seen the originators of the firing.

Some of my colleagues had already arrived, and with the help of two members

of the airborne Military Police had taken possession of a house for use as H.Q. Quickly we organized an office in the kitchen. There was not much work for us to do—just the handling of wireless messages; we carried only a small amount of office equipment when we dropped, but later we expected to get a typewriter and stationery, which would be delivered by glider.

As soon as we were settled in I was given permission to look for my pack, with the warning that there were snipers about. It was a fruitless journey, and just as I was about to return to H.Q. I heard the roar of aero-engines. Looking up, I saw a long stream of aircraft towing gliders; as they arrived overhead the gliders were released, and soon they were landing all around me. Many of them came down with a fearful crash, for the ground was not level, and in addition to trees dotted about there were poles which the Germans had stuck in the ground to prevent such a landing. One huge glider hit the ground with an awful smack, about 300 yards away, and I ran to it expecting to see carnage. I found the crew enjoying a handful of grapes. I told them the general situation, and made my way back to H.Q.

In the evening came more aircraft towing gliders. Soon the sky was full of them, turning and twisting as the pilots sought for a place to come down on the crowded landing zone. It was a terrific picture of Allied air might. Next morning planes dropped supplies by parachute; it was a beautiful sight as the sun's rays caught the hundreds of coloured 'chutes floating down. Among the dropped items was the war correspondent of a London newspaper. It was his first jump, and although all went well for him his precious typewriter, which was in a kitbag strapped to his leg, broke away and crashed to the ground a tangled mass.



TROOP TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT OF THE R.A.F. parked nose to tail on an airfield in southern France in August 1944. Twin-engined Dakotas were often used for parachuting operations as described in this story, and their pilots were usually expert at locating the dropping zone. Some of the author's comrades, however, were dropped in error 40 miles from the rendezvous, but joined up with the Maquis and added to the bewilderment of the enemy.



Motto: "By Force of Arms"  
**No. 65 SQUADRON**

**D**ISBANDED after the First Great War, the squadron was re-formed at Hornchurch, Essex, on July 10, 1934, was there at the outbreak of the Second Great War and was eventually equipped with Spitfires. At one time or another it had pilots from England, Northern Ireland, Iceland, Canada, Australia, Jamaica and Trinidad. Equipped and maintained by East India funds raised in 1940 for the British war services, it became known as No. 65 (East India) Squadron. It took no part in the campaign in Northern France, 1939-40.

For some time it operated with the U.S. 8th Army Air Force, accompanying the heavy bombers on a series of daylight raids to Berlin. Before D-Day it was converted to a Mustang squadron, and moved to France in June 1944, operating from an advanced airfield that was within range of the German guns. Forming part of a mobile wing that bombed and shot-up bridges, enemy armour, transport, troops, barges and trains, No. 65 was credited with having destroyed or damaged 1,000 armoured vehicles in two months.

Its moves were rapid, and carried out at short notice. At one airfield the squadron was able to fly only one mission before it was on the road again; on another occasion the entire airfield was transferred a distance of 75 miles in 13 hours. During the German retreat across France and the Low Countries, the squadron's pilots stated that once they saw British and German convoys on the same road, separated by only 200 yards.

No. 65 was eventually based near Brussels and flew in support of the air landings at Arnhem. Returning to England it acted as escort to R.A.F. bombers on missions to Norway and Germany, as well as operating over Denmark.

Sitting down and trying to be a clerk when others were chasing Jerries struck me as dull, and I was glad when I had the chance of going after some captured transport. I managed a lift on a French vehicle to a large building, about a mile away, which had been a German H.Q. There were Germans everywhere, and our men were bundling them on to a big charabanc affair. I got hold of an onlooker and managed to convey to him that I wanted a car; without a word he led me to a garage at the back of the house, showed me a smart-looking camouflaged Opel, and I drove back to H.Q. in great style.

More gliders came, until there were hundreds scattered about, some parked in a small clearing side by side like taxis. Parachutes were dotted wide over a large area. Some of our men were dropped, in error, as much as forty miles away; but this,

## I Was There!

instead of being a liability to our main forces, proved invaluable, as they joined with Maquis troops and created havoc among the enemy. I was impressed by the Maquis, some of them mere lads but armed to the teeth with weapons and ammunition dropped by the R.A.F. in months past.

We moved from our village house to the German H.Q. where I had obtained the car, and our office there would have done credit to Whitehall; big desks, an excellent typewriter, a duplicator and a vast amount of assorted stationery, all supplied by Germany, Ltd. It was an enormous house and the original occupants, a French lady and her servants, were still living in part of it. The amount of German equipment lying about was unbelievable. They had left in too great a hurry to remove anything. Some of their souvenirs included pictures and crockery from the Star Hotel, Jersey.

### So This Was the Invasion Coast

Again we moved, our next H.Q. being in a house high up in the hills, from which there was a wonderful view. Besides our brigade an American airborne division had been engaged, and with the capture of Fréjus and St. Raphael the remainder of the large task force streamed ashore. Our brigade was then withdrawn from action, and there was not much to do in the office so I decided to visit Cannes, which had just fallen. For transport I had to rely on my thumb, and it did not let me down. It enabled me to pick up a truck that was going in the direction I wanted. The road ran along the coast, which from a distance looked like a part of Cornwall, with bright-looking villas and hotels at the cliff edge.

But first appearances were deceptive, for this was the invasion coast, and on D-Day Allied warships and aircraft had shelled and bombed all the beach defences. The cliffs, beaches and woods were a mass of barbed wire, and everywhere there were notices "Achtung—Minen." German equipment and clothing were strewn about, and for miles we did not see a soul. It seemed impossible that the desolate, war-battered region would ever again echo with the laughter of holiday-makers.

As we rounded a curve I saw across the water the white town of Cannes stretching down to the edge of the deep blue sea. Here the truck stopped, for the driver was turning inland. I got out, the truck moved away, and I was left high and dry and lonely. After about a quarter of an hour a jeep appeared filled with fellows whom I knew. They managed to squeeze me in, making eight all told.

## I Swam For Life Through Black Oil

Of a crew of 59 only 11 survived when the tanker Tricula, of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, was destroyed by enemy action, in the Atlantic, on August 3, 1942. Third Officer J. R. Richardson gives a graphic account of his nightmare ordeal and escape.

**T**OWARD the end of July 1942 the motor-vessel Tricula left Curaçao, Netherlands West Indies, after loading a cargo consisting of 8,000 tons of fuel-oil: heavy, dark stuff, 8,000 metric tons of which is the equivalent of about 1,760,000 gallons. All that oil, and a good deal more, was needed urgently for our naval forces in the Mediterranean. We sailed in convoy, and parted company from the other ships on the morning of the third day of August.

The weather was fine and the sea smooth. Radio warnings of U-boats kept our look-outs on their toes; so when a dark object was sighted, we made a hurried attempt to ram—and realized just in time that it was only a whale on the surface. When the attack on the Tricula was launched the time was 4.20 p.m., and Captain Oswald Sparrow was on the right wing of the bridge talking to Chief Officer K. J. Morris. Second Officer

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Narrowly missing running over a dead German in the middle of the road, we passed through a small village about four miles from Cannes, then came to a blown bridge with a mine-shattered jeep on the wreckage. We tried to cross a track at the side, but it was blocked by a smashed lorry. Another truck had stuck in the middle of the river, which was about two feet deep. As we were debating what to do, there was a terrific explosion and bits of metal fell around; a half-track vehicle, trying to cross at a point five yards downstream, had exploded a mine at the water's edge and injured some onlookers.

### The Concealed Visitors' Book

Certainly that river was not healthy, and we decided to take a track which looked as if it might lead over the mountains to Cannes. After a very bumpy two-mile trip the track ended at a house, whose occupants received us with open arms. On learning that we could not stay they pressed us to accept a bottle of wine. We reluctantly agreed that we could not make Cannes, and so started back along the coast road. At the half-way point we encountered an hotel that seemed to be not only undamaged but open. It was the Hotel St. Christophe, and the proprietor, Monsieur Barbero, expressed himself as very pleased to see us. He explained that he had little food, but we gave him a couple of tins of Spam and he fixed us a salad. Before leaving he asked us to sign our names in the register.

I turned the pages, covered with names of people from all over the world. Across one page was scrawled "Liberation, Aug. 23!" Then followed the names of a few Americans who had paused for a "quick one" as they chased the Germans towards Cannes only a couple of days before. Apparently the Germans had been only too eager to shoot anybody who professed friendship with the English, so Monsieur Barbero had hidden the book with its many English names, assuring them that it had been burned. He had agreed to keep his hotel open as a German officers' club, and so had been allowed to stay. When we bade good-bye to our genial host we had the utmost difficulty in persuading him to accept any money.

**C**HALKED faintly on a wall near the hotel were the words "J'ai perdu mon coeur a un sergent allemand; je n'aime pas la France. Vive l'Allemagne." (I have lost my heart to a German sergeant. I do not like France. Long live Germany.) The girl who wrote the words was pointed out to me. Her hair had been shaved off.

N. H. P. Davies was in the chartroom writing up the log, and I was off-duty. It was customary for me to take a nap in the afternoon, and that day I stayed longer in my bunk meditating on questions for a projected quiz—until there came a thunderous din.

It seemed as if the bunk had been wrenched away bodily from under me. How the devil I came to be standing upright on the cabin deck when a split second before I had been lying flat, was quite incomprehensible at the time. I must have performed an involuntary somersault and alighted right way up, like a cat. Instinctively I grabbed the side of the bunk and my desk. All around me books and other loose articles which had been flung down slithered about from the effect of two more violent explosions. Then, as the deck began to list, I realized that the Tricula had been torpedoed—and I must get out of that cabin pronto. How many of our officers and crew below had been killed by the explosions

## I Was There!

will never be known. Some lost their lives by drowning, carried down by the ship, which sank within a minute of the first blow from the unseen U-boat.

My cabin was next to the Fifth Engineer's in the amidships accommodation, which also includes the navigation bridge, chartroom and radio office. Fortunately, I had sense enough to grab my "strangler"—the life-jacket—and turning to the open door saw two or three of my fellow officers hurrying past. I stumbled out, but the ship was now listed so badly that I had to scramble along the port alleyway with one foot on the deck and the other on the acutely sloping bulkhead. The tanker was rolling over slowly and horribly. I heard the First Radio Officer call out that the alleyway door was jammed. Yet this seemed the one chance of escape, and by a desperate effort I got that door open and dragged myself out. It was impossible to see farther than a few yards through the writhing smoke. I groped for the ladder leading to the lower bridge, and clawed my way up with the sea rushing at my heels. Not a dog's chance of getting a boat away—no second thought was needed about that. I managed to scramble into the life-jacket on reaching the bridge deck, and I remember getting a fleeting glimpse of the Second Mate on the starboard side. Any delay now and I knew I would be carried down as the ship turned turtle, so I dragged myself over the rail and plunged into the sea that was now swirling over the tank-deck.



J. R. RICHARDSON

Like Struggling Through Treacle

Instead of coming to the surface I was held down. Something that suggested the tentacle of an octopus fastened on my right leg—probably a rope attached to one of the rafts. My ears felt as if they would burst, and I gulped acrid brine. Strangely enough I lost all sense of fear. Absurd though it may seem, I had only a feeling of sadness that the wedding I had planned for my next leave could never take place! Yet I must have struggled fiercely, because suddenly my leg became free and I rose with extraordinary speed and shot half out of the water into a blaze of sunshine. The kapok life-jacket which had helped

me up supported me when I settled back in the sea. My eyes opened on a fantastic scene—and I wasn't aware then that my forehead had been cut open and my right eyelid slit in halves by something during the underwater struggle. The tanker had gone. Rolling smoke obliterated part of the tropical sky. All round me the sea was black, and the floating wreckage was black. The fuel-oil had burst from the shattered tanks and the ocean surface was covered thickly with it over a wide area.

I didn't know it, but in addition to seawater I had already swallowed enough fuel-oil to render me an invalid for months. All my mind and remaining strength became devoted to reaching some kind of solid support, and the best chance appeared to be a black raft some distance away with what looked like two Negroes crouched on it. The ensuing swim for life was the sort of ordeal one might have in a nightmare. It was like struggling through treacle. The thousands of gallons of fuel-oil that would have been a priceless boon to the Mediterranean Fleet had become a deadly menace to the lives of those members of the Tricula's company who, like myself, had survived the torpedo explosions. The sea was covered two or three inches thick with the stuff. My arms and legs thrashed desperately. My body seemed to be encased in elastic bands that impeded all efforts.

GLIMPSES of the raft on which three figures were now to be seen dispelled a tendency to despair. A couple of black objects near to hand proved to be water-breakers which must have been blown out of one of the ship's lifeboats, and I tried to push them forward with the idea that water might become a vital need in the future. But a shout came from the direction of the raft: "Come on! Come on! Leave those ruddy things!"

I reached the raft and was dragged on it by Second Officer Davies, who recognized me only by my voice—because I was as black with oil as himself and the others. For a time I could only lie flat, too ill and weak to stir a finger. Whistles and voices came from various directions in that wide area of oil-polluted sea. We couldn't see anyone; but eventually we were approached by another raft, and these blackened survivors proved to be Chief Officer Morris, one of the passengers and a Chinese quartermaster. Two others also reached us, making eight in all on the rafts; and later three more, who weren't seen by us, were picked up. Among the lost was our gallant master, Captain Sparrow, believed to have gone down with his ship.

Some of us had severe spells of sickness due to the oil swallowed. Our eyelids were gummed up and we had to unstick them at

intervals with our fingers. Our bodies were coated with the awful stuff, and we slithered about helplessly on the oily rafts. When I sat up, blood dripped on my right shoulder; but I didn't know how severely I had been injured and no one could tell me because of the oil smeared over my face. I had lost my shorts in the sea and now wore nothing except the soggy life-jacket over my chest and back.

### Amazing Sight in the Dark Night

Presently the rafts drifted through a clear channel, and I picked up a clean splinter of wood and tried to scrape the oil from my face, but without much success. We knew roughly the position where the Tricula had been "bumped," and reckoned we were about 175 miles from the nearest point of the West Indies. By drifting, with due allowance for tides and current, we thought we might make a landfall in about seven or eight days. But our main hope of rescue was pinned on the chance of a passing ship or aircraft.

No one had a watch, and we could only guess the time by sunset, the rising of the moon and position of the stars. The paddles weren't much good for getting along; they were smothered with the slippery oil and we had no means of removing the stuff as our hands and everything else were oily. The rafts, which we had managed to moor together, were equipped with water kegs and emergency rations, but most of us were too sick to worry about meals. A heavy shower during the night added to our discomfort. For long periods the silence was broken only by the creaking of the rafts and lapping of water, and (I was told afterwards) by my weird ejaculations during spells of delirium.

Suddenly one of the Chinese roused us: "Light! Can see light!" We unstuck our eyelids and looked with amazement at a blaze of lights—a fully-lighted neutral steamship! Chief Officer Morris yelled for us to get out the flares, but we couldn't unscrew the caps—our oily fingers slipped round them—and we cursed in our fear that the ship would pass without sighting us. At last someone jabbed one open with a knife, and the red flame attracted the notice of the liner's look-outs. Soon we were taken aboard the Rio San Juan, an Argentine vessel bound for Pernambuco.

Our rescuers mistook us for Negroes, and it took lashings of kerosene, hot water and soap before we regained our natural colour. My injured eye was operated on by a German doctor who was a passenger in the ship, and he made a good job of it. For months afterwards I had spells of sickness owing to the oil that had got into my system, and everything I ate or drank had a nauseating flavour.



MOTOR-VESSEL TRICULA, of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, was carrying 8,000 tons (about 1,760,000 gallons) of fuel-oil intended for our forces in the Mediterranean when the incidents described by Third Officer J. R. Richardson occurred. The terror of swimming when the stricken Tricula's cargo poured out in a sticky flood and covered the surface of the sea he shared with ten others from the crew of 59 on that memorable day in August 1942—and as a result of his experiences was an invalid for months.



## *I Was There!* **First to Meet the Japanese in Malaya**

When the enemy struck their first blow at Malaya in December 1941, British gunners of the 5th Field Regiment, R.A., fought to hold the airfield at Kota Bharu. Their unavailing struggle and the start of the fighting retreat which ended at Singapore are described by Gunner H. W. Berry. See also portrait and story in page 446.

**W**e arrived at Kota Bharu on the night of December 5, 1941. After the bright lights of Ipoh, on the opposite side of the Malay Peninsula, where we had been stationed for the past month, our new camp did not impress us. We were about 30 miles outside the town, our "barracks" being wooden huts in the middle of a rubber plantation. Everyone was heartily fed up with rubber plantations, and we were to get even more tired of them during the next few months. The most popular song among the isolated British troops was a parody, "I hope that I shall never see another blinkin' rubber tree!"

In the middle of our first night there we were called on parade and informed that a Jap convoy had been sighted heading towards Malaya and it looked as if they meant business. We "rookies" from England were confident that it was a false alarm. After weeks of standing-to on the British coast at the beginning of the same year prepared for the oft-threatened German attack we were inclined to be sceptical. But this time we were wrong, and on the night of December 7-8 the blow fell. The Japs had commenced landing operations at Kota Bharu and we were officially at war.

Our unit was the 73rd Field Battery of the 5th Field Regiment, R.A., and we were the only British troops of the 9th Indian Division, which had the job of defending the whole of the north-east corner of Malaya. The rest were Indians, mainly Hyderabad State Troops. We climbed into our vehicles

and in convoy formation rolled off towards the battle-front. Dawn was breaking when we arrived at our rendezvous. The vehicles were parked and camouflaged and we waited further orders. Except for occasional explosions in the distance and the faint hum of aircraft it seemed fairly quiet. Excitement rose when, early in the afternoon, a dispatch rider who had accompanied some officers to the front returned with what we took to be authentic news.

"You'll be back in your camp by this time tomorrow, boys!" he told us. "The Air Force has sunk hundreds of landing-barges and the Japs have been beaten off!" We congratulated each other, gave silent thanks to the Air Force and began to look forward to relaxing in our camp bunks. Our optimism was short-lived. A few hours later we were ordered to advance and go into action. The Japs had returned at a different part of the coast and had already been successful in establishing a beach-head.

### **Our Confidence Rudely Shattered**

A half-hour's journey brought us to the aerodrome on the other side of the town. We pushed our guns into position, well-hidden by the trees surrounding the airport, dug trenches, and waited for the order to fire. Nothing startling happened, so we commenced making ourselves "at home." We brewed tea and the cooks prepared a bully-beef stew. There was not much activity on the airport, but we knew that sooner or later the Japs were bound to come and bomb

either us or the nearby hangars. With grand fatalism we refused to let that worry us. The immediate consideration was rest—and something to eat and drink. The future would look after itself. . . Suddenly a shout went up.

"Take cover! Here they come!" The faint hum of approaching aircraft grew louder, and presently we saw them. There were five, and they confirmed the impression we then held of the Jap Air Force. They were all single-cockpit biplanes, and as they sailed slowly over our position we couldn't help chuckling. "Wait till the Spits and Hurricanes get on their track," we told each other. "It will be sheer slaughter!"

**B**UT as they passed right overhead we gave gasps of astonishment. They weren't Japs. They had the circular red, white and blue on their wing-tips! Someone suggested they were our training planes getting away whilst the going was good, and it seemed the only reasonable explanation. . . It was a long time before we realized that we had very few aircraft in Malaya and that they were nearly all out of date. Neither did we appreciate at the time the splendid fight our pilots put up in their 100-m.p.h. crates against the superior Jap craft.

Our confidence was again shattered when, a few minutes later, we saw a squadron of low-winged monoplanes approaching from the north. "At last!" we said. "Here come the Spitfires!" We stood out in the open and cheered, but rushed for cover when they started dive-bombing and machine-gunning the drome. This time it was the Japs. Before we went into action that night we saw most of the hangars on fire and all the aircraft on the ground destroyed. Our air arm had ceased to function.

As soon as night fell we received the order to fire. I was a signaller, and grew more miserable as the night wore on, trying to



**LANDINGS AT KOTA BHARU** opened the Japanese offensive against the British forces in Malaya in Dec. 1941. Assault troops came ashore in landing barges under cover of fire from a fleet of warships. Lightly equipped, very mobile and well-trained in jungle warfare, the Japanese threatened to overwhelm the scanty British force in the north-east corner of the country. If the landing at one point was checked another would be made at a different place, probably miles behind the British front line.

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From the drawing by Leo Rawlings

## I Was There!



**CIVILIANS EVACUATING KOTA BHARU** streamed out to escape the Japanese invaders on the night of Dec. 7-8, 1941. Smoke from burning oil-dumps rises thickly in the background. From the drawing by L. Raulings

get messages through on a faulty line, and to hear and make myself heard above the continuous noise of the howitzers only ten yards away. Then it started raining; and indeed it knows how to rain in Malaya. I had orders to try to repair the cable leading to our other troop of guns. Having no torch I had to grope my way through the undergrowth, and when I reached "Eddy" Troop I found they had ceased fire and were preparing to move. I dashed as fast as I could in the darkness back to my own lines and with more luck than judgement managed to find my vehicle.

### Knew Not What Was Happening

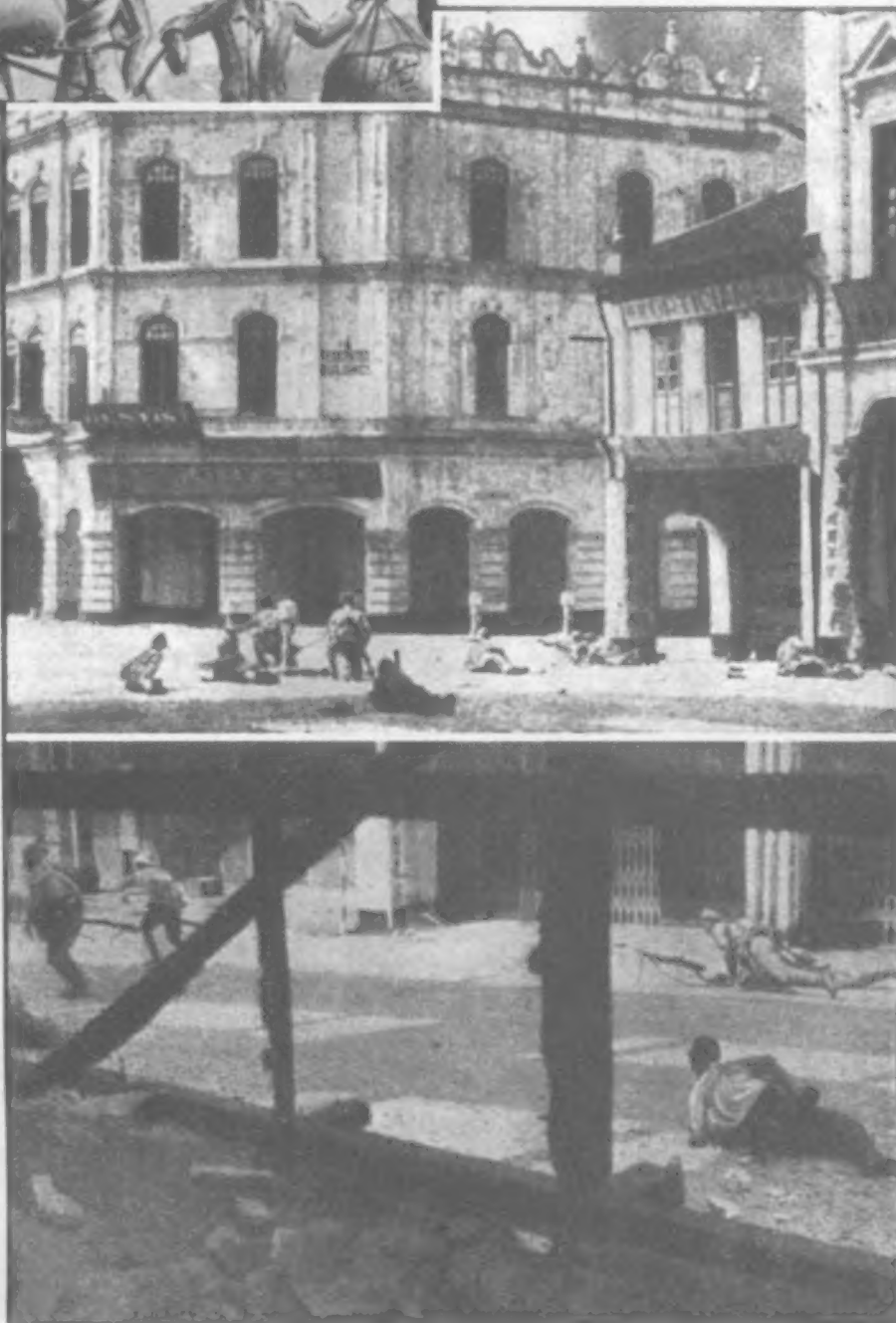
The main route from Kota Bharu that night looked like the London-Brighton Road on a Bank Holiday. Hundreds of vehicles were trailing each other with headlights full on. If the Jap Air Force had thought to come our way then all would have been lost. And so for the next fortnight the battle raged along the 50 miles to Kuala Krai. Days and nights had little meaning for us. We slept and ate when we could. It was impossible to stay in one position for longer than 24 hours, as the Jap pilots would spot us. So we would go into action for as long as possible, beat a hasty retreat, find a "hide" a few miles farther down the road, then go into action again. So it went on, a queer nightmare without beginning or end.

None of us knew exactly what was happening. We didn't even realize that the war was going badly for us and that on the other side of the Peninsula the Japs were making a far speedier advance. Having a knowledge of shorthand, it became my job (when we weren't in action), to tune-in to the B.B.C. every night and take down the news. We felt quite proud when the announcer stated that British troops in the north-east of Malaya had made contacts with the enemy. It often struck us as quaint that people in London, 5,000 miles away, knew more of what was going on out here than we did!

**ALTHOUGH** we thought we were putting up quite a good show we realized it couldn't last. Losses among the Indian infantry were enormous, and we were always in danger of being cut off by the enemy thrust through Penang. Eventually we were finally driven back to Kuala Krai, where the road ended

and the railway remained the only way open to the south and safety. One by one, whilst still firing, the guns were withdrawn and hauled to the station. All night we worked loading guns, vehicles, ammunition and other war material on to the open railway trucks, and as dawn broke we pulled out en route for Kuala Lumpur, some 200 miles to the south-west, and to what we thought would be a rest, with time to overhaul our equipment and strengthen our defences. Strange how optimism refuses to die, even when one knows the odds are piled heavily in the enemy's favour.

**BUT** such was the speed of the Jap advance that within a few days we were once again in the front line. By January 11, Kuala Lumpur and its aerodrome had to be abandoned. And so the sad story continued until February 15, 1942, when at Singapore we received the order to cease fire—and we commenced our weary three and a half years as prisoners of war.



**STREET FIGHTING DEVELOPED AT KUALA LUMPUR** as the Japanese followed hard on the heels of the close-pressed and greatly outnumbered British forces. Though each road-crossing (upper) was hotly contested the enemy worked through the town, as these Japanese photographs show, covering the main advance with light automatic weapons (lower). PAGE 637

I Was There!

## Chased by a Radio-Controlled Bomb

Searching for U-boats off the coast of Spain, on August 27, 1943, H.M.S. Grenville made the uncomfortably close acquaintance of an eerie secret weapon—dubbed "Chase-Me-Charlie" by the Royal Navy. What happened is told by Lieut. John Herbert, R.N.V.R. (portrait in page 570).

THE war seemed very far away. A few miles distant lay the coast, its azure blue mountains dimly visible in the sweltering heat. Officer of the Watch, signalmen and look-outs had discarded their shirts, and their brown backs were evidence of the days we had spent in the Bay of Biscay under the heat of the sun. We were off the north-west corner of Spain—Cape Ortegal—with the sloop Egret, the frigates Rother and Jed and the Canadian destroyer Athabaskan, searching for U-boats which were in the habit of returning to their hide-

outs in French ports by creeping round this corner of Spain and then up the coast.

It was about 1 o'clock when the alarm sounded. Everyone in the wardroom made a dive for the door, and on reaching the bridge we found we were being attacked by about 20 JU 88s which had come in very high but were now flying at about 3,000 feet, circling around us. All ships had broken formation and were now manœuvring at high speed. Over towards Spain I saw a long line of splashes where a stick of bombs had fallen quite near to one of the frigates.

The Captain ordered "Open fire," and the Grenville shuddered at the first salvo. For 20 minutes we were firing while the ship heeled under full helm and the increase of speed. We shifted target continually, in order to engage as many aircraft as possible. The little frigates were armed only with 3-inch guns and contributed little to the barrage we had to put up to keep the Germans at bay. Presently we noticed

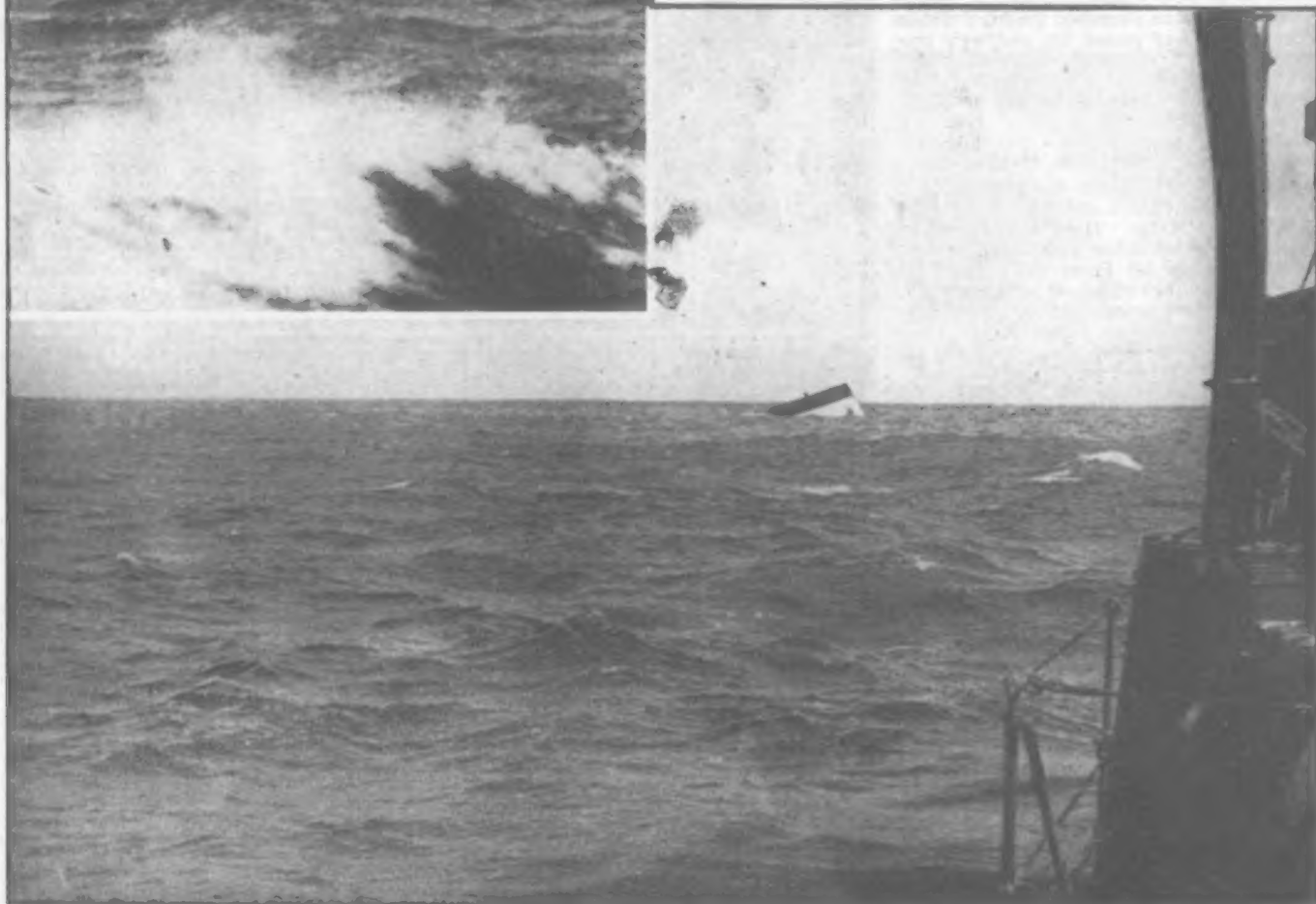
that several aircraft were flying parallel to each ship's course and not attempting to make the usual bombing attack. That was ominous, for the day before we had received a signal from another ship that had been attacked by aircraft armed with a new secret weapon.

Suddenly an object, looking rather like a paravane—a small body with short wings set in the middle—darted out from underneath the fuselage of the aircraft nearest to us. The bomb, which was emitting quantities of smoke from its tail where there seemed to be some kind of rocket propulsion, started off in the opposite direction to that in which we were going. When it was about 300 yards in front of the parent aircraft it started to turn towards us.

### Searching for Egret's Survivors

The captain altered course—and the bomb changed direction with us; it was approaching us fast now and everyone's gaze was fixed on this uncanny horror. The close-range weapons—the Oerlikons and Bosfors guns—beat out a rapid tattoo, but the thing was moving very swiftly and the gunners found it difficult to assess the deflection. "Hard a starboard full ahead together!" ordered the Captain, looking over his shoulder at the fast-approaching bomb.

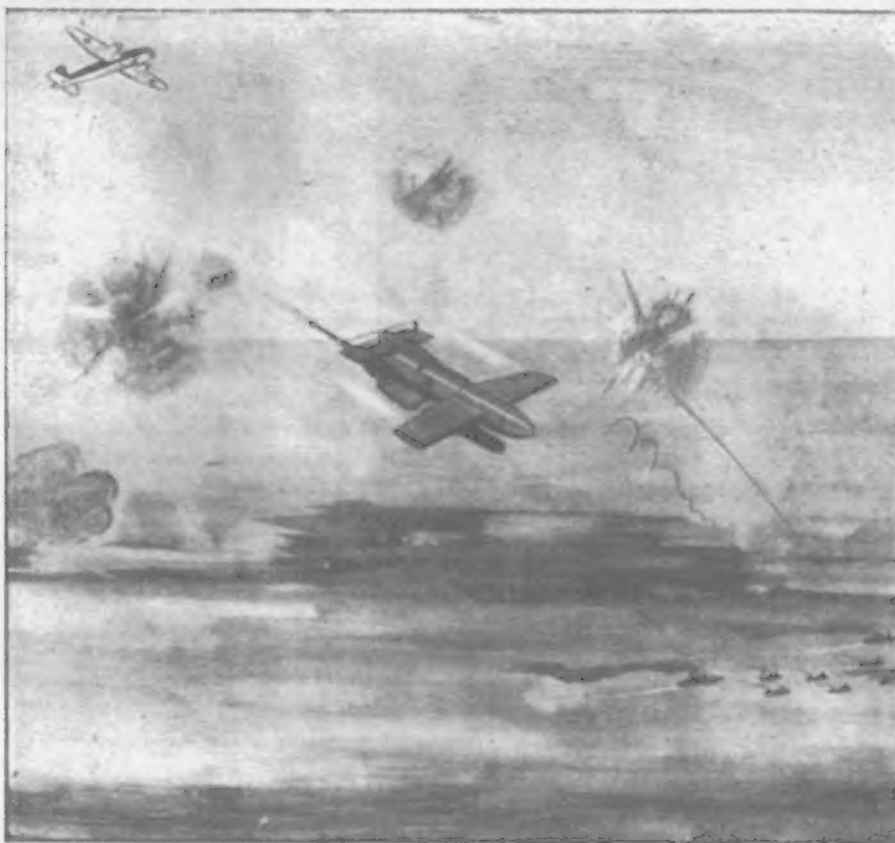
"Thank God!" most of us muttered, for now we were swinging under full rudder faster than the bomb could turn, and as it plunged into our wake we heaved sighs of relief. We had been so preoccupied that we had had little time to see how the other ships were faring. Now we saw that the Egret had been hit. We spotted her through a huge mushroom-shaped pillar of smoke



STRUCK BY A SECRET WEAPON, H.M.S. EGRET appeared as a huge pillar of smoke and flame (top), then was seen sinking (above), off the coast of Spain in August 1943. Completed in 1938, the Egret's displacement was 1,200 tons and designed speed 19.25 knots; main armament, eight 4-in. A.A. guns. The author of this story, who served in H.M.S. Grenville, which narrowly escaped the Egret's fate, recounts the uncanny experience of pursuit by one of these secret weapons—a radio-controlled bomb.



## I Was There!



**GERMAN RADIO-CONTROLLED BOMB**, directed towards a large Allied convoy by the pilot of the parent aircraft, swoops down upon its selected target. Though this secret weapon was at first very successful against merchant shipping, its premature use in attacks on warships permitted counter-measures to be developed before the losses had assumed serious proportions.

just after her magazines had blown up, exploding hundreds of rounds of Oerlikon and Bofors shells. Through the smoke and flame we saw her roll slowly over.

We had another bomb directed at us, but now we knew what to look out for. It was towards the end of the attack that the Athabaskan was hit. A bomb struck her just below the bridge and started a fire on B gun deck. She was immediately enveloped in clouds of cordite smoke, but she fired on; through the smoke we saw four of her six guns belching. The Germans had now used up all their bombs and departed to the east. Keeping a good look-out for any more aircraft that might be lurking around, we set about searching for survivors of the Egret, whose bows were still visible. Wreckage was strewn over a large area and over it all the thick sickly smell of fuel-oil. The latter was inches thick on the water, and it saturated the hammocks, fenders and general flotsam. We saw a few small groups of survivors, trying to keep together, every now and again giving a shout, and we must have seemed agonizingly slow in our approach to them.

### Amazing Underwater Experience

The three ships lay stopped and were lowering boats as quickly as they could. These were soon hard at work, returning to us every few minutes, their human cargo so exhausted that they lay in the positions they had assumed when they were dragged over the side. As each man was received aboard he was taken away to the bathrooms, stripped, and washed with shale oil. Between the three ships about half of the Egret's company was picked up—including her doctor, who had had an amazing experience.

The bomb had, apparently, hit the Egret's depth charges, which accounted for the tremendous explosion, and the shock had stunned him. When he recovered his senses the ship was on her side and every-

thing was in darkness. There was only one small patch of light, and he realized that it must be the surface of the sea: he had somehow got into an air pocket and would have to dive down under the ship if he were

to get out! This he did, and was now cheerfully engaged in telling us about it—dressed in borrowed clothes and drinking tea.

There came the shrill squeal of the bos'n's call and the cry of "Clear lower deck—up first and second motor boats—up whaler!" and in a few minutes we were once more on patrol. Much to our regret we had to leave the Athabaskan to make her own way back, crippled as she was. The Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth, signalled us that, owing to the pitch which the U-boat warfare had reached, every ship available had to be launched into the fight and we could not be spared to escort the Athabaskan back to England. It was with heavy hearts that we steamed away from her and left her to limp home alone, at the mercy of any JU 88 that might sight her. That night the Germans claimed to have sunk her, but five days later we heard that she had arrived safely in Plymouth harbour.

### Sinkings Might Have Been Doubled

From that day, these weapons that had sunk the Egret, damaged the Athabaskan and frightened the wits out of us, were known to the Navy as Chase-me-Charlies. We claim that it was one of the Grenville's able seamen who thought of the name and abbreviated it to C.M.C. They were rocket propelled, and radio-controlled by the pilot in the parent aircraft, who conned the bomb on to his target. The Luftwaffe eventually sank a large number of Allied ships with these bombs, and if they had used them more judiciously they would have doubled their sinkings. Instead of launching their first attacks on a large Atlantic or Mediterranean convoy, or at a beach-head congested with shipping, the first and second attacks were against a small and relatively unimportant naval force that could manoeuvre with far more flexibility than any slow-moving convoy; and the result was that a detailed description of the secret weapon and the tactics to be used when avoiding it was soon circulated to the Allied fleets.

## NEW FACTS AND FIGURES

**A**LL over East Africa branches of the British Legion are springing up, members being mainly coloured ex-Servicemen who volunteered during the war and served in many parts of the world. In Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Nyasaland there are now nearly 40,000 Legionaries, and a special badge has been produced for native members: about the size of a sixpence, made of an alloy that will not deteriorate in hot climates, it has a ring and safety-pin for attaching to native clothing.

**T**HE first of two ships carrying 955,000 pairs of footwear for men, women and children in the British zone of Germany docked at Hamburg in November 1946. German production of footwear is rising, but even with this British consignment it is possible to provide only every third person in the zone with a pair of boots or shoes.

**H**AMBURG at the end of 1946 was still the most badly damaged port of North-West Europe. At the time of the German surrender (May 1945) 75 per cent of the installations had been destroyed. The amount in working order has been increased to 40 per cent, but the cargo turnover in 1946 was no more than 4,000,000 tons, compared with 25,000,000 tons in 1938.

**B**REMEN, next biggest German port, and its sister ports of Blumenthal and Bremerhaven, also lost 75 per cent of their installations. With 50 per cent again in operation they handled some 3,800,000 tons in 1946 against 6,000,000 before the war.

**R**ELEASES from British forces and auxiliary and nursing services in October 1946 totalled 117,960. The number of men and

women released and discharged from June 18, 1945, when demobilization began, to the end of October 1946 was 4,109,730; the target was 4,098,420.

**I**N the British zone of Germany 48 factories worked to produce a Christmas allocation of sweets for German children up to 18 years of age. More than 1,625 tons of sugar, besides other ingredients, were required to produce the ration of just under nine ounces for each child. No sweets are normally available for German children.

**T**HE last contingent of British and Indian soldiers left Batavia on November 29, 1946. Their 14 months in the Netherlands East Indies from September 1945 had cost the British Army 63 killed, 153 wounded and 23 missing; the R.A.F. 22 killed, 22 wounded and one missing; and the British Indian forces 528 killed, 1,239 wounded and 297 missing. Our forces, including the Royal Navy, evacuated 125,000 people, among them 84,000 prisoners of war and civilian internees; the R.A.F. alone flew 30,000 people out of the islands. Our troops disarmed and repatriated 300,000 Japanese and collected huge quantities of arms and ammunition; landed 700,000 tons of supplies; rehabilitated docks and restored essential services.

**P**LANS are being made for the return home of some 50,000 of the 200,000 German refugees in Denmark. The British zone is receiving 12,000; Russian military authorities announced in November 1946 that they would accept 15,000 Germans who before their evacuation were resident in the Russian zone; the French and American zones are to take 12,000 each.

## Daughter of One Faithful Unto Death



**HER MOTHER'S GEORGE CROSS** will be four-year-old Tania Szabo's most treasured possession in the years to come. On Dec. 17, 1946, it was announced that Violette Szabo, the English widow of a French officer, had been awarded the George Cross nearly two years after she had been shot by the Germans for her work with the Maquis; the story is in page 631. According to her grandfather, Mr Charles Bushell, of Brixton, London, Tania is the image of her mother and a great tomboy.

*Photo, G.P.U.*

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